THE REAL PRESENCE OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE EUCHARIST

CARDINAL GAETANO DE LAI

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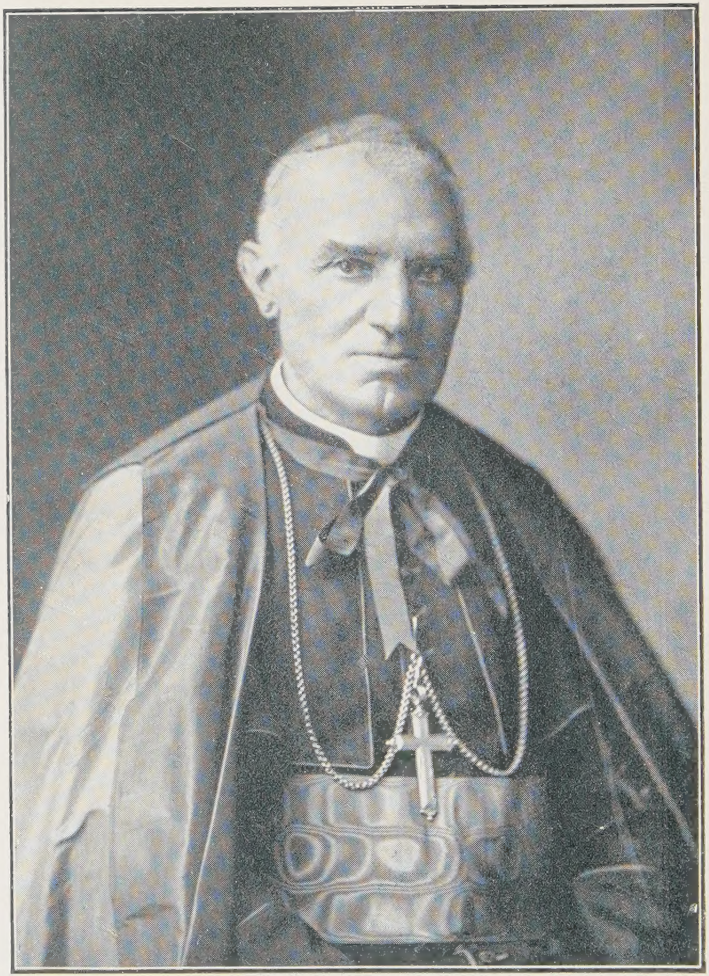

HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL GAETANO DE LAI.
Bishop of Sabina.

THE

REAL PRESENCE

OF

JESUS CHRIST

IN THE EUCHARIST

BY

CARDINAL GAETANO DE LAI

Translated from the Italian of the Second Revised and Enlarged Edition

BY

A CHRISTIAN BROTHER

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LETTER OF CARDINAL DE LAI TO THE TRANSLATOR.

ROME,
16th April, 1925.

I am very grateful for your excellent and accurate translation of my modest work on the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.

It is a source of real joy for me to know that this study of mine will now be brought to the notice of so many speakers of the English language, and that this has been made possible by a son of Ireland—a country whose children, wherever they go, spread the knowledge of the truths of faith, and especially of the Holy Eucharist.

I now recall with pleasure the fact that before 1870 the students of the Irish College in Rome enjoyed the privilege of bearing the canopy as the Holy Father bore the Most Holy Sacrament in the *Corpus Christi* procession.

I thank you with all my heart for your kindness, and I beg that God may reward you abundantly and bless you and the whole Institute of the Christian Brothers.

✠ G. CARD. DE LAI.

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CARDINAL GAETANO DE LAI.

Cardinal Gaetano De Lai, Bishop of Sabina, Sub-Dean of the Sacred College and Secretary of the Sacred Consistorial Congregation, was born in Malo, in the Diocese of Vicenza, Italy, on 30th July, 1853.

Still a youth of sterling virtue and keen intelligence, hearing the call of God to the sacerdotal life, with holy ardour, he entered the Diocesan Seminary, then the Pontifical Seminary of St. Apollinaris. Here he had as fellow students the Cardinals Gasparri, Giustini, Svampa and Tecchi. All through his course he held his place amongst the first of the students, obtaining degrees with high honours in Philosophy Theology, Canon and Civil Law.

He celebrated his first Mass on 16th April, 1876, in the Church of St. Apollinaris, and at once entered into the service of the Holy See. Soon he was Auditor, and later Sub-Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of the Council. Leo XIII., in the last months of his life, appointed him Pro-Secretary and subsequently Secretary of the same Congregation.

The Congregation of the Council, previous to the reform instituted in 1908 by Pius X., attended not only to the discipline of the clergy and of the faithful and the interpretation of the Tridentine laws, but also to the government of dioceses.

The holy Pontiff, Pius X., when Bishop of

Mantua and Patriarch of Venice, was struck by the rare gifts of mind and heart of Monsignor De Lai, and he created him Cardinal in the Consistory of 16th December, 1907, assigning to him the Diaconate of St. Nicholas in Carcere. The Pope longed for his counsel and help in his great struggle against modernism, and his wise reforms of clerical discipline, dioceses, and the Congregations of the Roman Curia, the programme which has rendered this Pontiff immortal, and given him a place amongst the great Pontiffs of the middle ages. In the Consistory of 27th November, Pius X. promoted him to the order of Bishops, and appointed him to the surburban See of Sabina. This promotion to the order of Bishops was most appropriate to the new Cardinal, since, as Secretary of the Consistorial Congregation, he was already at the head of the Catholic Episcopacy. The Holy Father consecrated him Bishop in the Sistine Chapel, 17th December, 1911.

The assiduity of Cardinal De Lai is amazing, not only in the many and serious affairs of the Consistorial Congregation, which is concerned with the nomination of Bishops, the progress of religion, and the government of the dioceses of all nations subject to the common law—Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Austria, Great Britain, Ireland, Jugoslavia, Switzerland, Poland, Hungary, United States of America, Canada, Mexico, The Philippines, South America and other dioceses in Africa and Asia—but also in discharge of his duties as member of the Cardinalitial Commission for the administra-

tion of the goods of the Holy See, as President of the Economato of the Ecclesiastical Congregations, as member of the Pontifical Commission for the interpretation of the Codex of Canon Law, of which he was one of the learned codifiers, as component of the Sacred Congregations of the Holy Office, of the Council of Religious, of Ceremonial, of Seminaries and Universities. For many years seminaries were under the Consistorial Congregation when the question arose of their re-organisation, and of founding great Central Seminaries, not before thought of, and under the impulse and the immediate direction of the Cardinal, the Regional Seminaries of Calabria, of the Puglias, of the Marches, of Umbria and Emilia were soon in operation. The new monumental Roman Pontifical Seminary for philosophical and theological studies near the Lateran was also established.

Cardinal De Lai has shown similar activity in his diocese of Sabina in the provision of churches and parochial houses, and in restoring the Seminary and the old temples of that illustrious See.

Despite all these occupations, the Supreme Pontiffs have on different occasions appointed him as their *Legate a latere*. In this capacity he presided over the Plenary Council of Sicily in 1920, over the National Eucharistic Congress of Genoa in 1923, and over the Plenary Council of Sardinia in 1924; everywhere he was received with the honours due to his dignity and to his exalted merits.

It is amazing that one so occupied with the government of the Universal Church could find time for the writing of books. In writing he found recreation and relief. A man of action he felt the need of short periods of rest and intellectual ease, and he took refuge at times in study, which he regarded as a prayer and a means of enabling him to correspond the better with the duties of his position. He has composed two fine works, *The Passion of Our Lord*, which has been translated into English by Cardinal O'Connell, and into French by Cardinal Dubois, and *The Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist*, now translated into English. These are works essentially historical and entirely religious, breathing the holiest and noblest thoughts, and revealing the great soul of the writer. The first book was the fruit of the intense, abiding love of Cardinal De Lai for the Holy Land, whither he had gone in pilgrimage three times, the last occasion being three months before his elevation to the Cardinalitial dignity. In his second work, *The Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist*, with deep historical, patristic, theological and liturgical knowledge, he has presented the eloquent arguments on which belief in the August Sacrament is based.

The first edition of this work was published in 1922, *and dedicated to His Eminence Cardinal V. Vannutelli, Protector of the Work of the Eucharistic Congresses. His Holiness, Pius XI, bestowed the highest measure of praise on the work, in the Brief whereby he nominated the author his Legate a latere, at the National Eucharistic Congress of Genoa, in September,* 1923.

APOSTOLIC BRIEF
OF HIS HOLINESS PIUS PP. XI

To Cardinal Gaetano De Lai, Bishop of Sabina.

Venerable Brother—Health and Apostolic Benediction.

The Seventh National Eucharistic Congress announced to be held in Genoa, the capital of Liguria, in May, has been postponed to the early days of September. In order to add to the dignity and magnificence of this event, as well as to show our appreciation of the generous hospitality of the citizens of this illustrious city, it is meet that from this maternal city one of

Our Legates should be appointed to preside over the Congress. This office We entrust to you, Our Venerable Brother, not only because of your dignity and distinction in the Sacred College, but also because We are aware of the fervent piety you cherish for the Most August Sacrament, concerning which you wrote and published quite recently a truly remarkable work. Through you, who will hold Our place, We, Ourselves, not only in desire and heart, but really in person, through you, will be with the citizens of Genoa and those assembled from all parts of Italy, to celebrate and venerate in a special manner the infinite charity of Jesus Christ, Who, that He might remain for ever amongst us and be for ever accessible to us all, hid His humanity under the Eucharistic veils. The blessings that will result from the Congress of Genoa will show clearly that We had ample reason for the lively expressions of joy which We poured forth at the last Consistory for having witnessed so great an awakening of fervour amongst Christians towards the Most Holy Eucharist. We anticipate that, owing to the measures that have been taken, this Congress will surpass, though that would seem impossible, the Congresses heretofore held, in its manifestation of homage to the Most August Sacrament. And now We cannot but imagine the intense pleasure Our Beloved Predecessor, Benedict XV, would feel were he still amongst us in witnessing such ardent zeal in his fellow-citizens.

Every effort must be made to secure that this Congress, over which, with Our authority,

you, Our Venerable Brother, preside, may attain the object which is the aim of the labours and the discussions of the different sections, namely, that the unbloody Sacrifice of the Altar may be, not only more intimately and deeply known, but, as is proper, that it may be more loved by the faithful: for We, in common with the Bishops, see and deeply deplore the fact that too many of the faithful are wanting in this love. We speak of the unbloody Sacrifice of the Altar, in which Jesus Christ, our Mediator with the Eternal Father, discharges for us the duties of adoration and thanksgiving, of expiation and impetration, which are of obligation on all men. This Sacrifice, while recalling and renewing the Passion of Christ and applying to men the fruits of redemption, pours out on the world an abundance of grace and the *refreshment and light of peace* on the souls in Purgatory.

We feel certain that the Congress will be successful, and productive of great good to the faithful. We picture to Ourselves the religious cortège, which, with great magnificence, will close the proceedings of the Congress, when, the Most August Sacrament being borne in a ship to sea, in the hands of Our Legate, We seem to behold Christ Jesus, as He passes over the Sea of Tiberias in Peter's boat. If the city of Genoa, in the palmiest days of the Republic, used glory in beholding its harbours filled with galleys after victorious battles, and merchant vessels laden with grain and gold and riches of every kind, it is certain that it never beheld a triumph like to that which it has

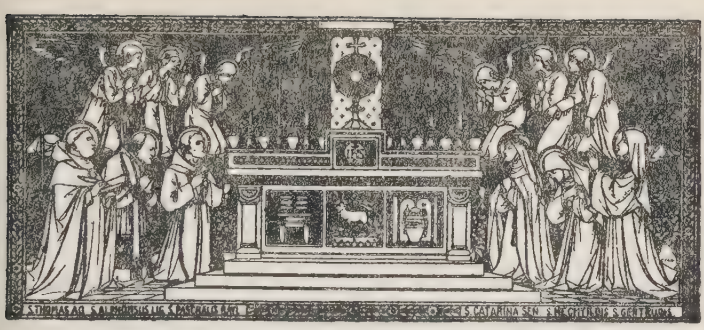
decreed, and is now preparing with ardent zeal for the King of Peace.

The most Blessed Virgin *della Guardia*, who from her sanctuary guards and protects the citizens of Genoa, will most certainly rejoice on beholding her Son, " the majestic Lord on the deep," surrounded by the multitude singing His praises and panting for peace and love. May the Most August Sacrament, raised aloft, Our Most Venerable Brother, in your hands, bless the sea and calm tempests and disturbances amongst men, so that navigation may be safe for those who seek to promote mutual relations and commerce amongst the nations, and especially for the missionaries who, together with the teaching of the Gospel, bring civilisation to savage and uncivilised races.

As a token of heavenly favours and a mark of Our paternal benevolence, to you, Our Venerable Brother, and to all those who shall assemble in Genoa, We, with intense affection, impart the Apostolic Benediction.

Given at Rome, at St. Peter's, the 10th day of August, Feast of St. Laurence, Martyr, the year 1923, the second of Our Pontificate.

PIUS PP. XI.



THE REAL PRESENCE OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE EUCHARIST.

The Object of this Book.

The Real Presence of Our Divine Lord in the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist is one of the most clearly taught articles of our faith, and is at the same time one of the most sublime, as well as most comforting truths of our Religion. That we may believe more unhesitatingly, and love and hope more ardently, it is especially useful to keep in mind the principal proofs on which our faith in the Eucharist is founded. To help to effect this is the reason for, and the object of this book.

We shall show, therefore, how the Eucharist was figured and predicted of old; how it was promised and instituted by Jesus Christ, and, finally, how insistently the Church, beginning with the Apostles, has ever preached and maintained this doctrine.

CHAPTER I.

Predictions and Figures of the Eucharist in most Ancient Times.

The Eucharist, according to the Catholic faith, is, in the first place, *a sacrifice*. Faith teaches us that, at the words of Consecration in Holy Mass, the Son of God made Man comes down upon the sacred altars, and under the sacramental species of bread and wine, conceals entirely both His Humanity and the splendour of His Divinity.

This is our belief, this the Council of Trent has defined (Sess. XIII), this is the unshaken faith of the Catholic Church.

The same faith assures us that the Holy Mass is not only a sacrifice, but is the renewal of the Sacrifice of Calvary, for the Victim is the same in both cases. The Sacrifice of Golgotha was bloody, but that of our altars is unbloody and mystical; in both it is Jesus Christ, the Son of God made Man, Who offers Himself to the Divine Father for us.

Hence what is offered to our heavenly Father in Holy Mass is a real and Divine Sacrifice.

We have predictions and unmistakable figures of this Sacrifice in ancient times.

***

Amongst all ancient peoples sacrifice represented the highest act of religion and of worship

by which they recognised God's supreme dominion over all things, implored His mercy, and rendered to Him their thanks. It was a law amongst the Jews that sacrifices were to be offered to God only in the great temple on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem.

God, through the Prophet Malachy, warned the Jews that He was not pleased with their sacrifices, not only because they were weak, and needy elements, *infirma et egena elementa*, as St. Paul wrote,[1] but because they were sullied with blemishes and defects, less serious, indeed, than those amongst the pagans, but always grave. He, therefore, preached a different and much better Sacrifice, and one that would not be confined to the Jews, but which should be spread amongst all nations. Here are His words: "I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of Hosts: and I will not receive a gift of your hand. For from the rising of the sun even to the going down, My name is great among the Gentiles, *and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to My name* A CLEAN OBLATION: for My name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of Hosts."[2]

The dislike shown by God for the bloody sacrifices in Jerusalem, and the prediction of a *clean oblation*, that was to replace them amongst all nations, is evidently a prediction of the Eucharist, the divine and bloodless sacrifice which has superseded all the old sacrifices, and which is renewed every day throughout the whole earth. This is the belief of all interpreters.

[1] Gal. iv. 9. [2] Mal. i. 10, 11.

It is, therefore, certain that a great Hebrew prophet, Malachy, centuries before the time of Jesus Christ, predicted the Christian Sacrifice of the Holy Mass.

From this point of view all the old Jewish and pagan sacrifices represented the great Sacrifice of the Son of God on Golgotha, and consequently the unbloody sacrifice of the Holy Mass; for they were the figure and token in anticipation of this divine Sacrifice, and from it they derived their efficacy and value in imploring the divine mercy. Very justly then did the Apostle St. John call Jesus Christ "the lamb which was slain from the beginning of the world"—"*qui occisus est ab origine mundi.*"[1]

***

Two sacrifices of the Old Law were, before all others, representative of the Sacrifice of the Divine Redeemer. The first is that of Abraham, who, in obedience to God's command, offers his son Isaac as a holocaust; but God accepts his good-will, and spares the life of Isaac. The second very celebrated example, also in the time of Abraham, and more nearly figurative of the Eucharist, is the sacrifice of Melchisedech, king of Salem (Jerusalem). This calls for a fuller explanation.

Abraham was returning victorious, and bearing the spoils of his victory over the five kings of Upper Asia. He meets the king of Salem, who, in thanksgiving for the victory, offers *bread and wine* as a holocaust, exclaiming: "Blessed be

[1] Apoc. xiii. 8.

Abraham . . . and blessed be the Most High God, by Whose protection Thy enemies are in Thy hands."[1] The Prophet David,[2] St. Paul the Apostle,[3] the Synagogue, and all Christian tradition agree that the Messiah, the Divine Redeemer, Christ Jesus, was prefigured in Melchisedech, "a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech." There is then no doubt (the Fathers of the Church and Christian sentiment are in agreement) that the Holy Christian Sacrifice of our altars was foretold and represented two thousand years beforehand in the sacrifice of bread and wine offered to God by Melchisedech.

And, therefore, as the *clean oblation* foretold by Malachy foreshadows the Eucharist, so does the sacrifice of bread and wine that was offered by Melchisedech foreshadow the same Sacrament.

* * *

The Eucharist, besides being in the Holy Mass (in its *fieri*) a Sacrifice—the unbloody renewal and continuation of the Sacrifice of Calvary—is also, in its permanency, the continuation of Christ's presence amongst us; it is the bread of heaven, the viaticum that supports us in our earthly pilgrimage; it is the sacrament that unites us to the Divine Redeemer by the union of food, than which there can be no closer union. This is our belief, this is the immutable faith of the Catholic Church regarding the Eucharist.

[1] Gen. xiv. 19, 20. [2] Psal. cix. 4. [3] Heb. vii. 4.

Under this aspect we find the sacrament wonderfully predicted and prefigured. We shall cite two examples which are certainly the most representative: the *manna* in the desert and the *bread* of the Prophet Elias.

About five hundred years after the time of Abraham, the Hebrew people—then very numerous, for there were more than 700,000 fighting men—departed from Egypt under the leadership of Moses to occupy the promised land of Palestine. They had to cross the desert, but they had no food. The Lord replies to the prayer of Moses: "Behold I will rain bread from heaven for you."[1] And the following morning, before sunrise, all round the encampment, the Hebrews beheld a white dew like coriander seed. And Moses said: "This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat"—*Iste est panis, quem Dominus dedit vobis ad vescendum.*[2] And for the forty years of their pilgrimage through the desert before they settled in Palestine, this bread never failed them. Every morning before sunrise the manna was at hand, and each one gathered a fixed quantity, sufficient for himself. *Nec qui plus collegerat, habuit amplius; nec qui minus paraverat, reperit minus*[3]—"Neither had he more that had gathered more; nor did he find less that had provided less." At sunrise the manna that had not been gathered melted away; that which had been gathered remained; it was kneaded like dough, and, as the Sacred Scripture says,[4] "having in

[1] Exod. xvi. 4.
[2] Exod. xvi. 15.
[3] Ibid. 18.
[4] Wisdom xvi. 20.

it all that was delicious, and the sweetness of every taste." Moreover, the manna had the power of maintaining in health all who partook of it; because of it *non erat in tribubus eorum infirmus* —" there were no sick amongst that people."

How many reminders are here of the Eucharist: it is the *daily*, supersubstantial, spiritual bread, as Christ has said, which nourishes and strengthens the faithful people in their earthly pilgrimage. By the greatest of miracles it descends each morning on the sacred altars. It enables him who receives it worthily to taste the sweetest spiritual delights; it heals and removes spiritual coldness and weakness; but when the sun of worldly interest arises it loses its efficacy and melts away. And in the Eucharist it also happens that he who receives less, as well as he who receives more of the sacred species, receives Jesus whole and entire.

Hence the miraculous manna that for forty years nourished the Hebrew people in the desert is justly considered a striking symbol and figure of the Eucharistic bread which nourishes the Christian people in their pilgrimage on earth; and, rightly, did the Divine Redeemer appeal to it when (as we shall soon see) He promised this great Sacrament in Capharnaum.

*
* *

Besides the manna as a figure of the Eucharist, the annals of the Hebrews tell us of another bread no less celebrated, although not given to the whole people, but to one faithful man alone, a Prophet.

Owing to the persecution of King Achab and the wicked Jezabel, the Prophet Elias was obliged to take to flight. After a long journey he was weary and sad, and sitting down under a juniper tree, after praying for death, he fell asleep. When lo! an Angel of the Lord touched him and said to him: "Arise and eat." Close to his head the Prophet saw a hearth cake and a vessel of water. He ate and drank the food thus sent to him by Providence, and fell asleep again. The Angel came again, touched him and said: "Arise, eat: for thou hast yet a great way to go." The Prophet "arose and ate and drank, and walked in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights, unto the Mount of God, Horeb."[1]

The sacred books of the Jews, Holy Scripture, narrates all this, so we also believe. Who can fail to see herein a plain symbol of the Eucharist? What is this miraculous bread which an Angel bears to Elias in his sadness and weariness, food that strengthens the Prophet for the long journey to the holy mountain of God? What else could it prefigure but the Eucharist, the bread from heaven, the bread of Angels that supports and strengthens the faithful in the battles of life until they reach heaven?

Hence we hold that from the most ancient times, from the infallible testimony of Sacred Scripture, we have unmistakable figures, symbols, testimonies of the Most Holy Eucharist, both as a sacrifice and a sacrament.

[1] 3 Kings xix. 4-8.

Thus the infinitely wise and provident God, before accomplishing the mighty design of His infinite mercy, was preparing souls, from ancient times, for the sublime mystery of love

CHAPTER II.

The Great Promise.

While the prophecies, symbols, and figures helped to prepare the minds of men for this stupendous mystery, they did not, however, reveal its intimate nature, nor afford any precise idea of what it meant.

But Jesus Christ Himself, a year before the Divine institution and at His Passion, partly raised the veil of this mystery, by announcing to the amazement of all, and even of the Apostles, that He would give to men a miraculous bread, of which all should partake, and that this bread would be His very Body.

This prediction is of unmistakable clearness for us who, in the light of subsequent events, know how to appreciate fully the words of Our Lord. For the Jews and for His disciples who, then for the first time, heard the great promise, and who did not understand how His Body and Blood could be the food of the faithful, His words were necessarily involved in mystery, and could be accepted only by faith in His divine and omnipotent word. Hence Our Lord, before fulfilling His great promise, wished to strengthen the faith of His disciples and of the people by a series of wonders which it is well to call to mind.

*
* *

After the festival of Purim[1] at which, in

[1] John v. 1 ff.

Jerusalem, He healed the man who had been paralysed for thirty-eight years, Jesus returned to Galilee. Wishing now to introduce the Apostles to their future mission, He sent them two by two to preach in the towns and villages of Galilee, and gave them appropriate instructions and power to heal the sick and the possessed. The Apostles returned with joy to their Divine Master, and said to Him, as did one day the disciples: "Lord, the devils also are subject to us in Thy name."[1] This was a good preparation and a further argument to win the Apostles' belief in the Divinity of Him in Whose name they were able to work such miracles.

News of the murder of St. John the Baptist by the tetrarch, Herod, now became known, and, either on this account or to give the Apostles a rest, for, as St. Mark relates, there were so many coming and going that they had not so much as time to eat, Jesus said to them: "Come apart into a desert place and rest a little."[2] And getting into a boat they crossed the Lake of Tiberias, called also the Sea of Galilee. The place selected was probably to the north-east of the Lake and Capharnaum, near Bethsaida Julia and not old Bethsaida, which is to the west of the Lake and Capharnaum.

The multitudes who had seen them as they set out followed them on foot—*turbae sequutae sunt pedestres de civitatibus*—as St. Matthew relates.[3] And when Our Lord disembarked with His Apostles, He found Himself surrounded by a crowd, and had compassion on them, for

[1] Luke x. 17. [2] vi. 31. [3] xiv. 13.

they were as sheep without a shepherd. Speaking to them of the kingdom of God, He instructed them and healed their sick—*languidos eorum.*

The hours were passing and it was now near sunset. The Apostles approached Our Lord and thoughtfully asked Him to dismiss the multitude, that they might procure food for themselves in the towns and hamlets near by, for they said: "This is a desert place and the hour is now past." Our Lord replied: "They have no need to go; give you them to eat." In His Divine prescience He knew well what was to happen and what He intended to do. He was testing His Apostles, to prepare them the better to believe. St. John states this expressly in his Gospel.[1]

And now a strange dialogue takes place. Jesus turning to Philip says to him: "Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?" Our Lord asked Philip, because being a native of Bethsaida he was acquainted with the place. The Apostles then consulted amongst themselves as to how to procure food, saying at length, "Let us go and buy bread for two hundred pence (about £1), and we will give them to eat."[2] Perhaps this was the whole amount in the treasury of the Apostolic College, and Judas, the Treasurer, who had already begun to steal, was nettled at the prospect of losing it. Perhaps he was the first of the Apostles to raise difficulties about the purchase of the bread. Justly did Our Lord (as we shall soon see),

[1] vi. 6. [2] Mark vi. 37.

hinting at Judas, style him *devil* and *tempter*. St. Philip then said: "Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every-one may take a little." And Andrew, Simon's brother, adds immediately: "There is a boy that hath five barley loaves, and two fishes; but what are these amongst so many?" Then Jesus said: "Bring them hither to Me."[1] The Master then told the Apostles to make the people sit down on the grass in groups of hundreds and fifties, and after having blessed the loaves and fishes, He broke the bread and told the Apostles to distribute it amongst the people. There were present five thousand men, without taking into account the women and children (in accordance with the Jewish custom). Assuming, therefore, that each man was accompanied by one or two persons, we may calculate that ten or fifteen thousand individuals, or even more, were present. All partook abundantly of the bread and fish, and after the Apostles had, by the Master's orders, collected the remains, they were found to fill twelve baskets. The Gospels do not relate how the miraculous multiplication of the loaves was effected; but all the people and the Apostles themselves, who beheld and had in their hands the miraculous bread which had increased and multiplied under their eyes, were amazed beyond measure.[2] The Evangelists and other writers of that early time record this extraordinary event which had become widely

[1] Matt. xiv. 18.
[2] Matt. xiv. 15-21; Mark vi. 35-44; Luke ix. 12-17; John vi. 5-14.

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known. Later, on another solemn occasion, Our Lord performed a similar miracle.[1]

The people amazed by an event so strange, so unheard of and so extraordinary, kept repeating: "Surely this man is the great Prophet, so long expected: this is the Messiah!" And brought up as they were in the belief that the Messiah was to be a powerful king of this world, they now proceeded to plan out how they would proclaim the Divine Master, King. Very different, however, was the mind of Our Lord; for infinitely nobler than the dignity of any king of this world was the dignity and the mission of the Man God, the *immortal and invisible King*, to Whom are due supreme honour and glory! Dismissing now His Apostles, the Master told them to cross the Lake to the west of Capharnaum and towards old Bethsaida. He then frustrated the foolish design of the people by withdrawing Himself, apparently by a miracle, from their midst and ascending to the summit of the mountain at whose base they were assembled.[2]

The people now perceiving that the Apostles had left in their boat, unaccompanied by the Master, and seeing that He was no longer there, scattered gradually and returned to their homes.

Night had fallen when the Apostles found themselves three miles from the shore. The boat was tossed about by the waves, for a strong wind had risen against them, and they were making no progress.

Lo! about three o'clock—*quarta vigilia noctis*

[1] Matt. xv. 32-39; Mark viii. 1-8. [2] Mark ii. 25.

—in the morning Jesus is seen approaching, walking on the waters! The Apostles, in terror, believing they saw a ghost, utter a shout of fear. But Jesus addresses them: "It is I, be not afraid"; and Peter, ever ardent and full of faith, cries out: "Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come to Thee upon the waters." Our Lord made answer: "Come," and forthwith Peter, jumping from the boat, walked on the waves. But the wind was very strong, and fearing that he was sinking, he cried out: "Lord, save me." And Jesus, seizing his hand, exclaims: "O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?" Both get into the boat, and the Apostles prostrate themselves at the feet of Jesus and cry out: "Indeed Thou art the Son of God." And the marvels did not yet end, for the storm ceased immediately, and the boat was at the shore.

By this series of miracles, Jesus meant to strengthen the faith of the people, and especially of His disciples, that they might believe His words.

Why, indeed, should they not believe in one who had shown Himself as omnipotent as God? His works proved Him unmistakably to be God. To heal the sick and to deliver the possessed by a mere word, as Our Lord on that very morning, as so often before, had done; to delegate poor and uncultured men, like the Apostles, as He had done a few days before, to work similar miracles; to increase by a blessing, that is, to create all at once, a quantity of bread and fish sufficient to feed thousands of people; to walk on the water in a storm and to enable the Apostle who had

asked Him to do likewise; to calm at once the tempest and bring the boat immediately to shore; all these acts formed a series of wonders possible to Almighty God alone. The works of Jesus, therefore, manifested and proved His Divinity. It is then easily understood, why those people believed that He was a great Prophet and the long-expected Messiah, and why, in their rude way, they wanted to proclaim Him King. More fittingly still did the Apostles throw themselves at His feet and cry out: "Truly art Thou the Son of God."

When Our Lord and the Apostles had disembarked at Capharnaum, they went to the synagogue. This building, which was destroyed and buried under the ruins caused by the earthquakes that overthrew the city after the death of Our Redeemer, was restored to public view in the last years of the nineteenth century. The ruins of the walls of that venerated building and some pillars are there yet, and the stone benches around the walls are still in position. Jesus entered the building and was immediately surrounded by Jews, many of whom had been present at the multiplication of the loaves on the previous day.

Amazed at the presence of Jesus with the Apostles, whom they had seen in their boat on the previous evening setting out towards Bethsaida without Him, and remembering that they had observed Jesus going in an opposite direction towards the summit of the mountain, with insistent curiosity they now kept asking: "Rabbi, when camest Thou hither?"

Here the celebrated discussion that was the prelude to the revelation and the great promise of the Eucharist took place, as described by St. John in his Gospel.[1] Had they believed that Jesus was the Messiah and the Son of God, which they could have inferred since they witnessed the miraculous multiplication of the loaves, He could have satisfied the curiosity of His questioners, and told them of the miraculous nature of His appearance. But he gives no explanation, nor does He reply directly to the question, but reading their selfish and unbelieving hearts, He administers to them a strong reproof: "Amen, amen, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you have seen miracles, but because you did eat of the loaves, and were filled." Our Divine Redeemer spoke thus, because those people, and many others, who boasted of being His disciples, followed Him, not because they believed in His Divinity and were disposed to obey His teaching, but because they were fascinated by His words and His miracles.

He next continued to exhort His hearers to seek, rather than the material bread which nourishes the body, that spiritual bread which is the nourishment of the spirit, that is eternal truth, which He taught. To teach them this truth, His eternal Father had sent Him to men —*hunc enim Pater signavit Deus*[2]; and further, in order to please God they must believe that He was the Messiah sent by God—*hoc est opus Dei, ut credatis in eum quem misit ille.*[3] Some of His hearers then boldly asked: "What sign,

[1] vi. 22-59. [2] vi. 27. [3] vi. 29.

therefore, dost Thou show that we may see and believe Thee? What dost Thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert, as it is written: He gave them bread from heaven to eat."[1]

To believe in Our Lord they demanded a miracle. But why? Had they not witnessed a miracle on the previous day, a very great miracle, on account of which they hailed Him as the Messiah and wished to proclaim Him king? True indeed; but for those obstinate men (they must have been Pharisees) that miracle was nothing, and to indoctrinate the people with this false idea, they acted as the incredulous and the evil-minded of every age are accustomed to act: they belittled the multiplication of the loaves by the Divine Prophet, contrasting it with the miracle of the manna that fell for forty years in the desert as food for the Hebrews; they said substantially: "What is your miracle compared to that wrought by Moses?"

Herein was a wily insinuation, meant to discredit Our Lord's miracle, but which in reality did not take away in the least from the greatness of what He had done; the miracle granted by God to the prayers of Moses was great indeed, but not less so was the multiplication of the loaves, which was wrought simply by the mere blessing of Jesus.

Our Lord took no heed of the base insinuation, nor did He enter into an argument as to the greatness of the respective miracles; but the malice of those ill-grained people afforded Him

[1] John vi. 30, 31.

an opportunity for the great pronouncement which He had resolved to make.

To the objection which glorified the manna as an incomparable heavenly food, Jesus answers: "Amen, amen, I say to you, Moses gave you not *bread from heaven;* but My Father giveth you *the true bread from heaven*. . . . For the bread of God is that which cometh down from heaven and giveth life to the world."[1]

The Lord was alluding to Himself and the holy doctrine which He had come to teach them. He repeated under another form and in figurative language, so dear and intelligible to Orientals, what He had said one day to the Samaritan woman who had come to Jacob's well for water. As He had told her to seek rather for the living water, namely the water of grace, which appeases the ever burning thirst of the soul for God and truth, and which satisfies it for ever, so He now exhorts the Jews of Capharnaum to seek rather spiritual food and grace, which gives true life, eternal life, rather than material bread which satisfies the body. But what the Samaritan woman understood, because she was well disposed, these ill-disposed men did not understand, and thinking only of material bread, they cry out: "Lord, give us always this bread."[2]

Jesus then unfolds His meaning clearly, saying "I am the bread of life (*Ego sum panis vitae*). He that cometh to Me (that is, becomes My disciple and hears My teaching) shall not hunger; and he that believeth in Me shall never thirst . . . because *I* came *down from heaven*, not to

[1] vi. 32, 33. [2] vi. 34.

do My Own Will, but the Will of Him that sent Me: and this is His Will . . . that everyone who seeth the Son and believeth in Him may have life everlasting, and I will raise him up on the last day."

Heeding only the words of Jesus, "I came down from heaven," these ill-disposed Jews in the synagogue of Capharnaum murmur to one another: "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know. How then saith He: I came from heaven?"[1]

Jesus, observing all this, for nothing is hidden from His divinely-illuminated mind, reproves them for their murmuring—*nolite murmurare in invicem*—and invites them to trust in Him, for He comes from the Divine Father Whom He alone has seen and heard. He concludes this first part of His discourse with the strong declaration: "*Amen, amen, I say to you, he that believeth in Me hath eternal life*,"[2] which meant as a necessary consequence that he who does not believe in Him will be lost.

With this affirmation as a foundation—and so great an act of faith was necessary in the first instance to secure belief in what He was about to proclaim—Our Lord proceeds to declare, for another reason also, that He is *the bread of life*, because He will give His Body and His Blood, His whole self, as food to men, and through this intimate union of Himself with men, He will support them by His grace. Here are His very words: "I am the bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the desert and died.

[1] John vi. 42. [2] vi. 47.

This is the bread which cometh down from heaven; that if any man eat of it he may not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever: and the bread which I will give, is My flesh for the life of the world."[1]

The Jews debated amongst themselves, saying: "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?"[2] They had understood the words of the Lord quite literally; and amazed at a thing so wonderful, they went away asking (and no wonder): "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?"

But Jesus does not explain how He means to effect the marvel; He rather confirms His promise and declares in still stronger words: "Amen, amen, I say to you: unless you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood hath everlasting life; and I will raise Him up in the last day; for My Flesh is meat indeed; and My Blood is drink indeed; he that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood abideth in Me and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me. This—(He concludes)—is the bread that came down from heaven. Not as your fathers did eat manna and are dead: he that eateth this bread shall live for ever."[3]

Truly here was no room for misunderstanding. No truth could be expressed in plainer and clearer terms. Despite the amazement and contention

[1] vi. 48-52. [2] vi. 53. [3] vi. 54-59.

of the Jews, who kept repeating: "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" Jesus withdraws not a word, but confirms solemnly the truth of His statement—adding: whoever will not eat His Flesh and drink His Blood shall not have eternal life. He repeats that His Flesh will truly be food and His Blood drink, and that the man who shall partake of it will abide in Him and He in the man, as happens with food; He compares man's union with Him to His own union with His Divine Father. He then concludes by re-asserting that for this purpose, He is "the living bread that came down from heaven; and that he who shall eat it (of course with proper dispositions) will not die as those in the desert, who ate the manna from heaven, but will live for ever," that is, will gain life eternal.

For us who know how Jesus has accomplished this marvel of His omnipotence and love His words leave no shadow of doubt, and far from hurting our weak susceptibility, they fill us with admiration for the sublimity of this institution of divine love. But the Jews?

Ah! how different for them! None of those who had crowded round Our Lord could dream of, or remotely imagine, the miracle which the Son of God would work to fulfil His promise. Many, moreover, had not the lively faith which was necessary to abandon themselves filially to Him and to trust His word. They were scandalized and went away exclaiming: "This saying is hard, and who can hear it?"[1]

[1] John vi. 61.

But Jesus is not moved, He does not weaken, He rather strengthens His words. Hence occurs what Holy Scripture relates: "After this many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him. Then, Jesus said to the twelve: Will you also go away?" But Peter's faith stands firm, and he answers for all: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and have known that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God."[1]

Such was truly the only possible reply in view of the promise of so astounding a miracle!

All this happened in Capharnaum, in the synagogue, in the year before the last Pasch of the Lord.

[1] John vi. 67–70.

CHAPTER III.

The Institution of the Eucharist.

Let us now turn our thoughts to Jerusalem on the evening before the Passion of Our Redeemer. He will be delivered by Judas in a few hours into the hands of His implacable enemies to be put to death. He knew and predicted all this, He grieves for it and tells it to Judas himself,[1] and yet in this sad hour He gives effect to His great promise in Capharnaum and establishes the Sacrament of His love.

The children of darkness basely combine to banish Him from the world, but Jesus peering into the future and beholding the children of light, the men of good-will, establishes the Eucharist, His ineffable Sacrament, which is to remain on earth to the end of time! Oh, marvel of love! Oh, Divine Omnipotence conquering human wickedness! Oh, infinite charity of the Son of God!

St. Paul directed attention to it even in those early days when he recorded in his Epistle to the faithful at Corinth,[2] that on the very night on which He was betrayed—*in qua nocte traditur*,—Jesus instituted this Divine Sacrament.

St. John called it to mind still more clearly in the following words of his memorable Gospel: "Before the festival day of the Pasch, Jesus, knowing that His hour was come, that He should

[1] Matt. xxvi. 21; Mark xiv. 18. [2] 1 Cor. xi. 23.

pass out of this world to the Father: having loved His own who were in the world—*in finem dilexit eos*—He loved them unto the end,"[1] as the Apostle so fully expresses himself.

That we may have a complete picture of the marvellous event it will be necessary to relate the various incidents in chronological order. Let us, therefore, return for a moment to Capharnaum.

The discourse in the synagogue had excited so many comments and objections, and had become so great a stumbling-block to many, that some, even of the very disciples of Jesus, ceased to follow Him from that day. Though Peter and the Apostles remained faithful they must have often recalled the incident and asked one another what these words, so strange and unattainable, and yet so clear and mysterious, could mean: *How can He give us His Flesh to eat and His Blood to drink?* This thought worried and troubled them. It was an enigma, as was that other prediction, so oft repeated by Our Lord and yet inconceivable to the Apostles, of His Passion, Death and Resurrection.

After the transfiguration on Thabor, when Jesus told the three Apostles not to speak of it to anybody, *nisi cum Filius hominis a mortuis resurrexerit*—"till the Son of Man shall be risen again from the dead"[2]—as they descended the mountain they asked one another what the words, "till the Son of Man shall be risen again from the dead," could mean. On other occasions as well, we find the Apostles inquiring into the

[1] John xiii. 1. [2] Mark ix. 9.

sense and import of their Divine Master's words. Of most holy Mary we read that she "kept all these words, pondering them in her heart"[1]—*Maria autem conservabat omnia verba haec, conferens in corde suo.* There can, then, be no doubt that the Apostles frequently recalled and discussed the mysterious words of Jesus in the synagogue of Capharnaum.

Furthermore, the incredulity of Judas since the days of Capharnaum,[2] and his suggestions and insinuations in their discussions, must have adversely affected them.

We cannot say, since the Scriptures are silent on the subject, whether, after Capharnaum, Our Lord explained more clearly to His Apostles what He meant, as He was accustomed to do when He spoke to the people in parables. He may have done so, but we may not assert it. If, however, Our Lord refrained from speaking about it, the mysterious nature of his words in Capharnaum should move them to discuss them. And this in itself was a remote preparation for the institution of the Eucharist.

There was also what may be called a proximate preparation: a solemn, marvellous preparation worthy of God; this was meant not only to accredit the Eucharistic mystery, but to accredit the whole accomplishment of human redemption, of which the Eucharist formed a part.

The cure of the man born blind, which even the Scribes and Pharisees were obliged to acknowledge; the still more remarkable miracle of the raising of Lazarus four days after his death

[1] Luke ii. 19. [2] John vi. 72.

and burial, a miracle accomplished by Jesus expressly in proof of His Divine mission, and before the eyes of His enemies, which disconcerted some and in part converted them, whilst it rendered others fiercer in their hatred; the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday a few days after; the mysterious voice from heaven regarding the Redeemer on that day: "I have glorified Thee, and I will glorify Thee"; His miracles and sublime discourses in the Temple on the three following days, discourses which so amazed and confounded the Scribes and Doctors and Pharisees that they dared not question Him, and which ended with those terrible words: "Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites"; all this was meant to reveal the Divine mission of the Prophet of Nazareth and to accredit His person.

Again, the terrifying prediction of Jesus to the Apostles on Wednesday evening before leaving Jerusalem, of the destruction of the Temple and the end of the world, was meant not to alarm them needlessly, but rather to inspire a salutary fear by the terrible description of God's punishments, and to make them more docile and believing.

What more could Our Lord do to prepare men of good-will for the stupenduous events that were to take place?

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On the following day (for us, Holy Thursday; for the Jews, the 14 *Nisan*,[1] the day appointed

[1] See Appendix, p. 161.

by Moses for the slaying of the Paschal Lamb and the Jewish Pasch) Jesus did not go in the morning to the Temple in Jerusalem, as He had done on the preceding days; but He sent Peter and John into the city to get ready everything necessary for the rite prescribed by the law.[1] He had spent the night with His Apostles in the hospitable house of Lazarus, at Bethania.

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It may, perhaps, be asked why Our Lord did not appoint Judas, the confidential agent of the Apostolic College, to this task, and it may be replied that he was passed over deliberately in order to make him reflect that he was discovered, and had lost the confidence of his Master, and that nothing can be concealed from the Divine Prophet. From this point of view the disregarding of Judas was an act of love on the part of the Redeemer, as also an act of justice.

It is possible that Judas was not in the company of the Apostles, because he was occupied with the diabolical enterprise of arranging with the enemies of the Nazarene how he was to betray Him.

Who can tell? Perhaps both reasons concurred to keep Judas from assisting in the preparations for the Last Supper. The incident, however, effected the accomplishment of a totally different and a Divine design. For that supper at which the Eucharist, the Sacrament of faith and love, was to be instituted, it was proper that Peter

[1] Luke xx 8 ff.; the other Evangelists and St. Paul, 1 Cor. xi.

and John, the Apostles of faith and love, and not a faithless traitor, should make the preparations.

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Having received the commission from their Master, the Apostles asked Him: "Whither wilt Thou that we go, and prepare for Thee to eat the Pasch?"[1]

Jesus answered: "Go ye into the city and there shall meet you a man carrying a pitcher of water, follow him. And whithersoever he shall go in say to the master of the house: The Master saith where is my refectory, where I may eat the Pasch with My disciples? And he will show you a large dining-room furnished; and there prepare ye for us."

They found everything as Jesus had told them and made the necessary preparations.

This precise prediction, a description and a vision of what was to happen, possible in the case of God alone, necessarily and certainly made a deep impression on Peter and John, and through them on the other Apostles, and must have confirmed still more securely their faith in the Divine prescience of their venerated Master. It was not, then, without a serious reason that Jesus had commissioned them to make the preparations.

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Vespere autem facto—"when it was evening"—Our Divine Redeemer and the Apostles went

[1] Mark xiv. 12-15.

to the Cenacle. The twelve were present as is expressly stated by SS. Matthew,[1] Mark,[2] and Luke,[3] with whom also St. John[4] agrees.

Not only were Peter and John present after having discharged their mission in Jerusalem, but Judas also, who, as Emmerich relates, had been running here and there about the city, arranging the details of his wicked undertaking, was also amongst them.

It is historically certain that the house appointed by Our Lord for the Last Supper and which was prepared by Peter and John was situated on Mount Sion, not far from the dwellings of the High Priests Annas and Caiphas. No one disputes the location of the house styled (by the first Christians) the *Holy Sion*, and now known as the Cenacle. Here the Last Supper was held, this was the place of refuge for the Apostles after the death of Our Lord, here He appeared to them after His resurrection, and here took place the descent of the Holy Ghost. St. Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem, in his celebrated *Cathecheses for Catechumens* (sec. 4), refers to its miraculous preservation, despite the many sad vicissitudes of the holy city.

Hither came Our Lord and His Apostles, and here was held, according to the Mosaic prescriptions, the supper of the Lamb, which was to be followed by that other supper, destined to become famous for ever, the Eucharist. Whatever any modern writers may imagine and support by reasoning, that appears to be nothing

[1] xxvi. 20. [2] xiv. 17. [3] xxii. 14. [4] loc. cit.

more but *a priori* cavilling sophistry, there is no doubt that each was distinct from the other, and that the legal Mosaic supper came first.

St. Luke[1] and St. Paul[2] state plainly that Jesus consecrated the Eucharist *postquam cenavit*, "after He had supped." And St. John, in his Gospel[3] says that *coena facta*, "when supper was done," Jesus washed the Apostles' feet; and "having sat down again," *cum recubuisset iterum*, He consecrated, as is the common opinion, the Eucharist. We, then, maintain that the Mosaic supper, which was made in accordance with all the prescriptions of the Law, was the first act of that memorable evening.

Then followed the washing of the feet. St. John describes it as follows[4]: "When supper was done (the devil having put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him), knowing that the Father had given Him all things into His hands, and that He came from God, and goeth to God; *He riseth from supper* (that is, from His place), and layeth aside His garments (the outer robe or cloak, which Jesus was accustomed always to wear), and taking a towel girded Himself. After that, He putteth water into a basin, and began to wash the feet of the disciples, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded."

Let us for a moment contemplate this scene, surpassing all human imagination. Jesus, the great Prophet of Nazareth, Who had filled the whole East with the renown of His name, He Who was called, as He really was, the Son of

[1] loc. cit. [2] 1 Cor. xi. 23. [3] xiii. 2. [4] loc. cit.

Man and the Son of God, the Worker of inconceivable miracles, He Who so many times had given sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, had healed lepers, made the lame to walk, delivered the possessed and cured the sick of all diseases ; Who, by His blessing, had so multiplied a few loaves and fishes as to supply sufficient food for thousands of people, Who had walked on the water as easily as on the solid earth, Who by a mere word had calmed the tempest, Who a few days before had given sight to a man born blind, Who brought Lazarus to life after he had been four days in the grave, Who quite recently had entered Jerusalem in triumph, Who by His supernatural wisdom, eloquence and further miracles had silenced the wise men of Israel and the Temple ; He Who a short time before had proclaimed to His terrified enemies : *Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am ;* He Whom at the Jordan, on Thabor, and in the Temple in Jerusalem a miraculous voice had proclaimed the *Messiah* ; He to Whom the venerated John the Baptist had testified that he *was not worthy to loose His shoes* ; He, in a word, before Whom St. Peter had prostrated and adored, and to Whom not once only, and in the name of all the Apostles, he had cried out : *Thou art the Son of the living God* ; this self-same Lord performs the lowliest act, the act of servants and slaves, the washing of feet. And for whom ? For twelve poor men, most of them fishermen, one a gatherer of taxes, the lowest in the social scale, amongst whom one was a traitor, all of whom were soon to fly from and forsake

Him, and at their head, Peter, who was to deny Him repeatedly. And Jesus knows this: He declared it and grieved at it, as we gather from the Gospels. Jesus, the "Son of God," washes the feet of all those men!

The Gospels do not tell us what were the thoughts and the words of Judas and the other Apostles in presence of this extraordinary scene. But when Our Lord came to Peter (who, as head of the Apostolic College, was probably the last whose feet were to be washed), in confusion he cried, as St. John relates[1]: "Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?" And Jesus, as the Gospel continues, replied: "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." Peter said: "Thou shalt never wash my feet!" But Our Lord replied immediately: "If I wash thee not, thou shalt have no part with Me." Then St. Peter exclaimed: "Lord, not only my feet, but also my hands and my head." With these words of faith and veneration, of complete abandonment and perfect obedience of the chief of the Apostles to the will of His Divine Master, the history of the washing of the feet closes.

Who can penetrate the mystery of this evangelical incident? Who can imagine all the reasons for this action of Our Lord? St. John in his Gospel raises the veil in part. After having narrated the washing of Peter's feet the Evangelist recounts these other words of Our Lord[2]: "He that is washed, needeth not but to wash his feet, but is clean wholly. And you (He added)

[1] xiii. 6-9. [2] xiii. 10, 11.

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are clean, but not all." For, as St. John remarks, He knew who was to betray Him; and therefore He said: "You are clean but not all."

All the commentators dwell on these grave words. Jesus speaks of the external cleanliness of the body; but this is a symbol and figure of that of the soul. He washed His Apostles' feet to denote the extreme cleanliness they should exhibit before approaching to the mysteries about to be celebrated; He acted on the body, but He reached the soul. That washing was then a baptism of purification. But not for all; and hence Jesus added: "You are clean, but not all." Here, then, we have one reason for the extraordinary act of Our Lord.

There was, however, another which St. John also discloses. Here are his words: "After He (Jesus) had washed their feet, and taken off His garments, being set down again, He said to them: Know you what I have done to you? you call Me Master and Lord; and you say well, for so I am. If then I, being your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; you also ought to wash one another's feet."[1] This was the great example of humility and charity which Jesus gave to His Apostles for their imitation. And He gave it just before the Eucharist and before admitting His Apostles to reception of the wonderful Sacrament.

Let us remember and never forget this solemn lesson. It is the lesson of Jesus to be kept before our minds when we approach the holy altar. Perfect cleanliness of heart, profound humility

[1] xiii. 12-14.

boundless love of God and of our neighbour; this is what Our Lord teaches as requisite before approaching Holy Communion.

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St. John, having given these explanations for the washing of the feet, does not dwell on the institution of the Eucharist, but he narrates the long discourses of Jesus to the Apostles, first in the Cenacle, after the departure of Judas, and next on the road to Gethsemane. We shall not refer to them, for they are not closely bound up with our argument; but we shall reply to a question which now naturally arises. Why does not St. John describe the institution of the Eucharist, as was done by the other Evangelists and St. Paul? The answer is not difficult.

One of St. John's objects was to supply some omissions of the other sacred writers. Before him the three Evangelists and St. Paul (as we shall see later) had written clearly of the institution of the Eucharist. Besides, when towards the close of the first century St. John wrote His Gospel, the faithful, who had increased immensely and spread throughout the earth, had full knowledge of the Divine institution. Hence it was not necessary for him to write about it. Moreover, St. John had written at length, and with a clearness that admitted of no doubt, when narrating the incident at Capharnaum and the amazing promise that the Divine Master would give His Flesh as food, and His Blood as drink.

Finally, by implication and with sufficient clearness to be understood by the faithful, St

John, in his Gospel, had indicated the Divine institution of the Eucharist in the words: *in finem dilexit eos*; Jesus "having loved His own who were in the world, loved them unto the end." What greater proof of love could the Son of God give us, poor mortals, than to leave us Himself, whole and entire, in this Sacrament?

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Before proceeding to the account of the Divine institution, it is necessary to clear away a small difficulty. St. Luke[1] and St. Paul[2] write that Jesus consecrated the Eucharist *postquam coenavit*, that is after the Mosaic supper—and St. John agrees with them, saying *coena facta*, "when supper was done," Our Lord girded Himself for the washing of the feet—while SS. Matthew[3] and Mark[4] say respectively *coenantibus eis* and *manducantibus*, "whilst they were at supper," Jesus consecrated the Eucharist.

Here there is no contradiction. Omitting other explanations there is one so obvious as to make the objections appear to be a triviality. Do we not say, "healths were proposed and speeches made at the dinner," although these took place afterwards. So also the expressions, "whilst they were at supper," and "when supper was done" are but different forms for reporting particular incidents in connection with the great event of the Last Supper.

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The following are the sacramental words, as

[1] xxii. 20. [2] 1 Cor. xi. 25. [3] xxvi. 26. [4] xiv. 18.

related by the sacred writers: "And whilst they were at supper (thus agree the *coenantibus* and the *postquam coenavit*) Jesus took bread, and blessed and broke; and gave to His disciples, and said: *Take ye and eat: this is My Body, which is given for you. (You also) Do this for a commemoration of Me.* And taking the Chalice He gave thanks, and gave to them, saying: *Drink ye all of this.* And they all drank of it. And He said to them: *This is My Blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many for the remission of sins.* And He added, as St. Paul[1] relates: *This do ye, as often as you shall drink, for the commemoration of Me.*"

In these brief and simple words, the three Evangelists relate, for the first time, the most wonderful event that ever occurred on earth, an event destined to be repeated everywhere, even to the end of the world.

We make no comment, but shall merely record what St. Cyril of Jerusalem wrote at the beginning of the fourth century in his celebrated *Catechisms:* "Since then the Lord of the bread declared: 'This is My Body' . . . who will dare hereafter to contest it? And since He Himself and with so solemn a statement said: 'This is My Blood' . . . who can be so incredulous as to say that it is not His Blood?"[2] And surely we, with the faith of the Apostles in the Eucharistic bread and wine, will recognise and adore the Body and Blood of Our Lord, or rather His whole Divine Person, which cannot be divided, and which, under the lowly appear-

[1] loc. cit. [2] *Catech. Mystagog.*, 4.

ances of bread and wine, is found therein, glorious and entire. It is indeed concealed from our eyes, because, as travellers here below, according to à Kempis[1]: "Mine eyes could not endure to behold Thee, O Lord, in Thine Own real and divine brightness . . . and, therefore, to make allowance for my weakness, Thou concealest Thyself under this divine Sacrament."[2]

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It is now necessary to recall another most important incident. In the Cenacle, on the evening of 14 *Nisan*, Jesus not only changed bread and wine into His Body and Blood (a change called *transubstantiation*); He did more: He ordered His Apostles to do likewise, and gave them the power to do it. He said, in fact: "*This do ye for the commemoration of Me*," as is expressly recorded by St. Luke and St. Paul.

He, the Son of the omnipotent God, had worked a miracle absolutely supreme. But more was required to perpetuate His presence on earth. A further act was necessary, a new exercise of Divine power. He therefore authorises and commands His Apostles, and through them their successors, to the end of the world, to do likewise. Oh, what omnipotence and incomparable love! Oh, Divine words which make men superior to the Angels, and give them power which is not possessed by the heavenly

[1] Book IV., Chap. xi. [2] Blessed Sacrament.

hierarchies! Who will ever be able to measure the depth and height of so great a mystery?

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Still more amazing is it that Our Lord tolerated the presence of the traitor Judas in the Cenacle.

Apart from the unmistakable testimony of St. Augustine,[1] St. John Chrysostom,[2] St. Leo, Martyr,[3] and others with whom St. Thomas[4] and Benedict XIV[5] agree, the Gospel obliges us to acknowledge his presence.

St. Luke[6] narrates that Jesus, after having blessed and broken and distributed the bread to His guests, as also the chalice, states that Our Redeemer uttered the sad and terrible threat: "But yet behold, the hand of him that betrayeth Me is with Me on the table. And the Son of Man indeed goeth, according to that which is determined: but yet, woe to that man by whom He shall be betrayed." Hence Judas, as he was present at the washing of the feet, was also present at the institution of the Eucharist.

The same conclusion is to be inferred from St. John's Gospel. In fact, after having narrated the incident of the washing of the feet, the Evangelist tells that Our Lord sat down again at table, and he reports also the same sad complaint that St. Luke relates. And he adds, dreadful to relate, that when Judas had received from Our Lord *intinctum panem*, "bread dipped," Satan imme-

[1] *Tract.* 62 *in Ioann.* n. 3.
[2] *Hom.* 60 *ad prop. Ant.*
[3] *Sermo de Passione.*
[4] P. III. q. 81.
[5] *De Festis*, 41, 43 ff.
[6] loc. cit.

diately entered into him. *Et post buccellam introivit in eum Satanas.*[1]

How many and what serious considerations are excited by this dreadful episode! Of Judas who, treading the path of crime, runs irrevocably to destruction, without being stopped by miracles, loving admonitions and even terrifying threats; of Jesus Who, after having resolved to give the faithful a proof of such infinite love, did not fail to give it, despite the wickedness of him who began the sad series of sacrileges. *Vincit omnia amor*—"Love conquers everything." And He Who makes His sun to shine on the good and the bad, Who sends His rain on the just and sinners, instituted the Eucharist, although a traitor was in His presence, and although, alas! He saw in the long course of ages the innumerable outrages to which it would be exposed.

This is the supreme proof of the infinite love of the Son of God for man. Let us, in profound humility and gratitude, bow down and adore Him.

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The institution of the Eucharist and the other striking events of that evening affected profoundly the minds and hearts of the Apostles. Of this there can be no doubt. If the simple promise aroused such wonder and so many disputes, what must have been the result of its realisation? The rapid succession of so many events, on that crowded evening and the following day, from Gethsemane to Calvary, did not afford

[1] John xiii. 21-31.

time to the Apostles to dwell at length on the miraculous institution, but there can be no doubt that they must have spoken about it during the three days when, bereaved and terror-stricken, they had retired to the Cenacle and to the houses of friends after the death of Jesus. Of this we have proof in St. Luke's relation.[1]

Two disciples, grieved at the death of Jesus, had left Jerusalem for Emmaus on Easter day. They had got early information of the resurrection from the holy women, but they did not credit it. Jesus joined them on the road, and, while not revealing His identity, reproved them for their incredulity. They continued in converse until they reached Emmaus, and the disciples induced their unknown travelling companion to remain and partake of refreshment with them. "And it came to pass, whilst He was at table with them, He took bread and blessed and brake, and gave to them. And then (continues St. Luke) their eyes were opened and they knew Him."[2]

We may believe, too, that Jesus at that moment made Himself known to the two disciples by other signs, as in the case of the Magdalen. It is certain, however, that they recognised Him when He renewed the Eucharistic rite of the Last Supper. St. Gregory the Great states this distinctly[3]: *Deum quem in Scripturae Sanctae expositione non cognoverant, in panis fractione cognoscunt*—"They knew Our Lord *in the breaking of bread*, though they had not recognised Him in the exposition of the Holy Scripture."

[1] xxiv. [2] xxiv. 30, 31. [3] *Homil.* 32 *in Evangelium.*

Since the renewal of the rite of the Last Supper caused the two disciples to recognise Our Lord, it is evident that they were quite aware of the event, and its renewal was a providential act, designed to open their eyes and cause them to recognise Jesus.

I know that Natalis Alexander and others (as always happens) maintain, that the blessing and the breaking of bread in Emmaus was a mere ceremony, and not the Eucharistic consecration. But I dare not attribute to the Son of God, risen and glorious, the adoption of such a pretence to make Himself known. With St. Augustine, Theofilatus and others, quoted by Calmet,[1] I hold that the blessing and the breaking of bread in Emmaus was truly the consecration.

We may remark that no other interpretation of the Sacred Text can be reasonably allowed. It states that Our Lord, "was at table" (*dum recumberet*); there is no question of the blessing preceding the refection. And then it happened (*factum est*) that Jesus took the bread and blessed and brake and gave it to the two disciples (*accepit panem, et benedixit ac fregit et porrigebat illis*). Why this blessing during the refection? Why this repetition of the scene at the Last Supper?

We may add that St. Luke[2] and St. Paul (in his Epistles) always understand that the Eucharist and the Holy Communion are meant by the *fractio panis—breaking of bread, communication of the breaking of bread*, nor do the words bear

[1] *Comm. in Luc.*, cap. xxiv. [2] Acts of the Apostles.

any other meaning. We then hold that, as Our Divine Redeemer wished to close His earthly life by instituting this Divine Sacrament and distributing it to His Apostles in the Cenacle, so He wished to begin His new life on the triumphal day of His resurrection, by repeating it in Emmaus for the two disciples, who were leaving the holy city, discouraged and sad.

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In conclusion we must acknowledge that on the evening of 14 *Nisan*, in the Cenacle on Sion, the great and so much discussed promise made by Jesus Christ in the synagogue of Capharnaum was accomplished. The one event completes and illustrates the other.

And amidst what extraordinary incidents is it accomplished! The imminence of the Passion, the significant preparation for the supper, the presence of the traitor, the threats, and the unheeded admonitions made to him, the washing of the feet, everything was marvellous. This supreme testament of Divine love was invested with all solemnity. The Son of God found a means entirely supernatural to perpetuate His presence amongst men, and to unite Himself with them. And after three days, on the glorious day of His resurrection, He hastens to renew the mystery and the memory of it, to console the saddened disciples of Emmaus. *Adoramus te Christe, et benedicimus tibi!*

CHAPTER IV.

The Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of St. Paul.

The promise made in Capharnaum is clearly the promise of the Eucharist. Jesus said: "*I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is My Flesh for the life of the World. . . . For My Flesh is meat indeed and My Blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood abideth in Me, and I in him.*"[1] This wasa specific promise of His presence in the Eucharistic bread.

"This is My Body, this is My Blood," He added in the Cenacle, when, taking the bread and the chalice in His hands, He distributed them to the Apostles.

If the Son of God did not wish to be charged with deceit and falsehood (we shudder in mentioning such) how could He escape the evidence of these words? Even Luther, much as he wished it, could not escape their force.

But it may be asked, what did the Apostles think, how did they understand them? What did the first Christians believe? To be assured the better of the force of these Divine words is very important, and we shall examine them in this chapter.

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The first Christians had largely increased in

[1] John vi. 51-57.

numbers in a short time, but being hated and persecuted, they could not possess any proper churches, and the Jewish converts of Jerusalem continued still to resort to the great Temple on Mount Moriah to adore God; those living elsewhere frequented the synagogues. And this was proper; for although a great part of Israel, not having heard Jesus Christ, had fallen away from the true faith, yet the Temple and the synagogues were holy places dedicated to the worship of the true God. It was prudent also to avoid any falling off in this attendance, so as not to arouse the ire and fanaticism of the other Jews against the nascent Christianity.

It is historically certain that such was the attitude of the first Jewish converts. We know from the Acts of the Apostles that the 3,000 Jews, who were converted at the first preaching of St. Peter, continued "daily with one accord in the Temple,"[1] and that St. Peter and St. John "went up into the Temple at the ninth hour of prayer."[2] Also of St. Paul after his conversion, we read that having gone to Antioch in Pisidia, he went to the synagogue[3] on the Sabbath day: and he did likewise in Troas,[4] Thessalonica,[5] Corinth,[6] and later in Rome, when he was led there as a prisoner.

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It was different, however, in the case of the converted Gentiles. They could not go to the pagan temples, since they were dedicated to idols and false gods. Hence, from the beginning,

[1] ii. 46. [2] iii. 1. [3] xiii. 14. [4] xvi. [5] xvii. [6] xix.

they assembled in specially selected houses which, on that account, became *the Christian assembly houses*, the *domus ecclesiae*; here they received instruction, discharged the duty of worship, and celebrated the Eucharist. Such were in Rome the houses of Pudens, the *domus Pastoris*, and later the mortuary chapels in the catacombs, the house of Marcellus and others. Such also was the palazzo of Ursacius in Sabina at *Forum novum* (now Vescovio) and which became afterwards the Cathedral of Sabina.

But from the beginning the convert Jews, after attendance in the Temple and in the synagogues for common prayer, were obliged to meet elsewhere, either to receive fuller instruction from the Apostles, or to celebrate the Eucharist, for such celebration could not be held where Scribes and Pharisees held sway. From the commencement of the persecutions it became necessary to abandon the Temple and the synagogues, and to assemble in the *domus ecclesiae—Church houses*—or houses of the Christian Community. For this we have the indubitable testimony of the Acts of the Apostles.

In chapter ii., after relating the conversion of the first 3,000 Jews, the Sacred Text continues: *Erant autem perseverantes in doctrina Apostolorum et communicatione fractionis panis et orationibus*—"And they were persevering in the doctrine of the Apostles, and in the communication of the breaking of bread and in prayers." [1] And again, after having repeated that they used to frequent the Temple, we have: *frangentes circa domos*

[1] verse 42.

panem, sumebant cibum cum exultatione et simplicitate cordis—"Breaking bread from house to house, they took their meat with gladness and simplicity of heart." [1]

We learn then from the Sacred Text that, besides frequenting the Temple, the House of God, for public worship, the first Christians used to assemble in special houses for the instructions of the Apostles, for prayer and for the breaking of bread, or as it was also styled, for the communication of the breaking of bread. All historians are agreed on this.[2]

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It may, perhaps, be asked why they met in particular houses—*circa domos*—and not in the Cenacle, that sacred and venerated place which from those early times was called *Holy Sion.* The Jews first converted in Jerusalem by St. Peter numbered 3,000; 5,000 more were soon added, and many others later. The seed of the Gospel spread and multiplied extraordinarily. It was, therefore, impossible to assemble them all in the Cenacle, which indeed was not a very large room, and not easily accessible for all. Hence they were obliged to meet in the most suitable houses they could procure, and such as were best adapted for the purpose, and these houses became the *domus ecclesiae*, the houses of the Christian Community.

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There is another interesting question: what

[1] verse 46.

[2] See Rohrbacher's *Stor. Eccl.*; Rufini's *La Gerar. della Chiesa*, pp. 56-83, Rome, Pont. Sem. Magg., 1921.

was meant by the words, "*assembling for the breaking of bread*" or "*for the communication of the breaking of bread*"?

This certainly cannot mean the ordinary act of eating. Truly would it be ridiculous for a historian and sacred writer to record that the faithful used *every day* go to houses to eat, and that they were *persevering* in eating. This might be said of Epicureans, but not of the primitive Christians, who led lives of such virtue and penance.

Besides, the context in the Acts forbids such a silly interpretation. St. Luke writes: "They were persevering in the doctrine of the Apostles, and in the *communication of the breaking of bread*, and in prayers." Now the interpellation of the words, *in the communication of the breaking of bread* between *the doctrine* of the Apostles, and *the prayers*, shows clearly that there is no question of an ordinary action, but of a religious and holy work.

What then was it? We have already suggested and shall soon learn of it more plainly. It was the Eucharist.

The liturgical act in which, and through which, the bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Our Lord, has been known for centuries by the name of the *Mass*, a word derived from the last words uttered by the priest when permitting the faithful to depart: *Ite missa est.*[1]

In the early days of Christianity the liturgical act of Consecration was called *breaking of bread*,

[1] See Benedict XIV., *De Sacrif. Missae*, lib. ii. c. 1.

and reception of the Eucharist, which we call Communion, was known as *communication of the breaking of bread.* How could it be possible to find words adequate to define acts of such Divine omnipotence ?

We must acknowledge that the terms used by the ancients were less imperfect than those adopted by us. The words *the breaking of bread* bring to mind the act of Jesus Christ at the Last Supper, when taking bread in His holy hands He blessed and broke (*fregit*) it, and gave to His Apostles while using the sacramental words: "Take ye and eat. This is My Body."

The word *Eucharist*, so universally used, and which most certainly means this sacrament, is a conventional word; it means, etymologically, *giving thanks.*

Very properly, then, has Communion been called from the beginning *communication of the breaking of bread* ; and the sacred function attending the Consecration of the bread and wine, and which we call the *Mass*, was called *breaking of bread.*

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Since we have referred so frequently to St. Luke's report of the early Christians, it is well to consider an obvious and evident reflection it excites. He says that the first faithful were *persevering* in the *communication of the breaking of bread*, and further on, *continuing daily in the Temple, they broke bread from house to house.* They were, therefore, persevering in Holy Communion, and they assisted at Holy Mass every

day. What of the Christians of the present day? What a lesson! What a difference!

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Another episode of later years, related by St. Luke,[1] confirms the correctness of what has been written.

In different places the Christians were being persecuted. St. Paul having gone for the second time to Troas in Bithynia, assembled the faithful on Sunday; but not in the synagogue nor in a place accessible to all. The persecution had broken out. Hence he assembled them in a particular house, in a room on the third floor. The following are the Evangelist's words:—

"On the first day of the week (i.e. Sunday), when we were assembled *to break bread* (*ad frangendum panem*), Paul discoursed with them, being to depart on the morrow: and he continued his speech until midnight. There were a great number of lamps in the upper chamber where we were assembled. And a certain young man named Eutychius, sitting on the window, being oppressed with a deep sleep (as Paul was long preaching), by occasion of his sleep fell from the third loft down, and was taken up dead. To whom when Paul had gone down, he laid himself upon him, and embracing him, said: Be not troubled for his soul is in him. . . . Then going up and breaking bread (*frangensque panem*) and tasting, and having talked a long time to them, until daylight, so he departed. And (continues the Sacred Text) they

[1] Acts xx.

brought the youth alive, and were not a little comforted."

It is not necessary to comment on the miracle and other circumstances that do not concern my argument. However, here again we have an assembly of Christians at night to celebrate the Sunday, and for the "breaking of bread." In the next chapter we shall learn from St. Justin that, from the second century, the Christians met on Sundays to celebrate the sacred mysteries and to participate in them. We learn the same from St. Paul. The Apostle assembled the Christians, and after long instruction, about midnight, "broke bread and tasted it," and then continued his discourse until daylight. There can be no doubt that this assembly, *ad frangendum panem*, at which the Apostle broke bread and first partook of it about midnight, was the celebration of the Sacred Eucharistic mysteries. Former considerations are materially strengthened by these circumstances.

This is probably the oldest description of the Christian liturgy for the Sunday and for a vigil.

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What need is there of further discussion? St. Paul himself explains and assures us that the *breaking of bread* amongst the early Christians was the Eucharist. Writing to the Corinthians[1] he asks them: "The chalice of benediction which we bless, is it not the communion of the Blood of Christ? And the bread which we

[1] 1 Cor. x. 16.

break (*quem frangimus*), is it not the partaking of the Body of the Lord ?

It is then certain. The *breaking of bread* and the *communication of the breaking of bread* were nothing else but the Eucharist : and St. Paul and the first Christians, in partaking of it, held for certain that they were receiving the Body and Blood of Our Divine Redeemer. At first they were persevering every day, and later, in times of persecution, on Sundays, in partaking of it. Such was the faith of the Apostles, such was Paul's belief, and such was the belief of the early Christians.

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There is another celebrated and classic statement of St. Paul's that confirms our view. It is found in the same Epistle to the Corinthians, chapter xi.

In this the Saint gently but firmly reproaches the Corinthians for the custom that had been introduced in the *Agape* or *Lord's Supper*, which at that time used to precede the consecration of the Eucharist. We know from the *Didaché* or *Doctrine of the twelve Apostles*, and from all the writers of the first century, that such was the rite that was employed in those early times. They wished to imitate in every particular what had been done by Jesus Christ at the Last Supper. Before the institution of the Most Holy Sacrament He had said : "Do this in commemoration of Me." Certainly this was meant imperatively for the Consecration ; but the Apostles wished to imitate the procedure even in the smallest details.

Our Lord had consecrated the Eucharist in the evening, after the Mosaic supper, accompanying the celebration with pious instructions and prayers. Although abuses occurred, the Apostles made no change; they wished that the Eucharist should be consecrated in the evening, after a fraternal or loving supper, styled in Greek *Agape* (in Italian *caritâ*) or *Lord's Supper*.

In the first days of fervour, and under the eyes of the Apostles, this sacred rite was observed without irregularities; but disorders soon arose. It was no longer taking their meat with *gladness* and *simplicity* of heart, as described in chapter ii. of the Acts of the Apostles. The rich used to bring their food and partake of it without sharing with the poor; they were even intemperate. This surely was a disorder. It is certain that St. Peter, in the opening of the second chapter of his Second Epistle, and St. John in his Epistle, when reproaching severely the rich among the faithful for intemperance in presence of the poor, were alluding to this disorder in the celebration of the Christian *Agape*. It is quite certain that St. Paul speaks plainly about it, and condemns it.

After having reproved the faithful of Corinth because they came together "not for the better but for the worse" (*non in melius sed in deterius*), he continues: "When you come together intc one place, it is not now to eat the Lord's Supper. For everyone taketh before his own supper to eat, and one indeed is hungry and another is drunk. What! have you not houses to eat

and drink in ? Or despise ye the Church of God (the assembly of the faithful), and put them to shame that have not ? What shall I say to you ? Do I praise you ? In this I praise you not."

St. Paul here evidently speaks of the *Agape* or *Lord's Supper* which usually preceded the *breaking of the Eucharistic bread*, the true Lord's Supper ; and he deplores the abuses attending it.

But not satisfied with this reproof, in order that the faithful Corinthians might the better realise the impropriety of such conduct, he contrasts it with the Eucharist which was to follow the *Agape*; and he takes occasion to remind them of what Jesus Christ had done at the Last Supper. " For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread, and giving thanks, broke (*fregit*), and said : Take ye and eat : this is My Body, which shall be delivered (*tradetur*) for you. This do for the commemoration of Me. In like manner also the chalice, after He had supped, saying : This chalice is the new testament in My Blood. This do ye, as often as you shall drink, for the commemoration of Me. For as often as you shall eat this bread, and drink the chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord until He come." That is, until His final coming at the end of the world.

The contrast between the Eucharistic supper, the supper of faith and love, and the *Agape* which was to precede the Eucharist and be a feast of fraternal love, but had become an

element of disorder, was plain, and should make the gentlemen of Corinth ashamed of their action. To make the contrast more remarkable, St. Paul continues as follows: "Therefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and of the Blood of the Lord . . . for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning (*diiudicans*) the Body of the Lord."

The *Agape*, or fraternal supper, productive of such evil results, as the Apostle had observed, rendered some unworthy of approaching the Eucharistic table, and St. Paul warned the faithful from taking part in it, in order not to violate the Body and the Blood of the Lord, and in consequence receive a sentence of death rather than life. Then he concludes: "Wherefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. If any man be hungry, let him eat at home; that you come not together unto judgment."[1]

This was clearly a lesson given by the Apostle to the Corinthians to regulate the celebration of the Christian *Agape*, which, as has been related, was at that time accustomed to precede the Eucharist. But how many truths are contained in his words, how many principles are expounded, how many lessons are given to the Christian people!

The Divine institution in the Cenacle is recalled. And thus St. Paul is one of the sacred writers who describe it. The faithful are

[1] 1 Cor. xi. 33, 34.

reminded of the holiness that is necessary for approaching this sacrament, otherwise they are warned not to receive, that they may not *render themselves guilty of the Body and of the Blood of the Lord.* We have here, then, a magnificent and authoritative affirmation of the Apostle regarding the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist : a declaration all the more solemn, because it is addressed to a whole people whom he had evangelised, and who were fervent in their faith.

We must then conclude that the Apostles and the faithful nearest to the time of Our Lord held with firm faith, and indisputable certainty, that in receiving the Eucharist they received the Body and Blood of Our Divine Redeemer.

CHAPTER V.

The Fathers of the First Centuries.

To the authoritative testimony of the Apostles and the Evangelists, assuring us that under the sacramental species were present the Body and the Blood of Jesus Christ, that is His whole sacred and Divine person, we must add the testimonies of the apostolic men who, directly or indirectly, acquired the knowledge of this truth from the Apostles and the disciples of the Lord, and transmitted the same to us.

The interest and attention shown by the first Christians in hearing the doctrines and teaching of the Apostles, are clearly evident from the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of St. Paul. The faithful unweariedly spent long hours and whole nights at the feet of the Apostles drinking in every word that fell from their lips. This we have seen from the Acts of the Apostles, chapters ii. and xx. And St. Paul reminded the Galatians[1]: "You received me as an angel of God, *even* as Christ Jesus"; and again, "You would have plucked out your own eyes and would have given them to me," to signify that they so loved him as not to know how to express their gratitude. We find similar expressions in many other places. The stupendous and frequent miracles, the inspired words, and the most holy lives of these men of God, could not fail to produce such effects. It was the

[1] iv. 14, 15.

effect of God's grace, employing the ministry of poor and ignorant men of Galilee, whom He had raised to the sublime state of the Apostolate. How else could the world have been converted ?

We may add that there was another motive, humanly speaking—one exceedingly grave—why the first Christians should interest themselves in, and make themselves quite sure of, the truth of the religion that was being preached to them and of what they were to believe and practise. For there was question of abandoning an entire past, to which they felt bound by so many bonds of history and literature, of nation and family ; there was question of belief in difficult dogmas and of adopting a new life that was so little in accord with human passions, a life which, moreover, exposed them to dreadful risks, to contempt, derision, prison and martyrdom.

Nothing represents to us in a more lively manner the eagerness of the early faithful, in hearkening to and recording the words of the Apostles, than what the great Irenaeus wrote to one Fiorinus. St. Irenaeus, the celebrated writer, Bishop of Lyons and martyr, was in his youth a disciple of St. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna The latter had been for a long time a disciple of the Apostle, St. John, and by him had been consecrated Bishop of Smyrna. St. Irenaeus, therefore, brings us very close to the Apostles. Now St. Irenaeus, in order to lead Fiorinus back to the practice of the Christian life, wrote to him as follows : " I saw you when you were still a boy, in Lower Asia, in the house of Polycarp, at a time when you still belonged to

the gorgeous Court of the Emperor, and when you came to visit that holy Bishop, and endeavoured to win his esteem. I remember what happened then much better than what occurred later; I could even tell where the blessed Polycarp was seated as he spoke. I remember his bearing, his mode of life, his whole appearance, and the discourses he was accustomed to make to the people. How he used to tell them that he had lived with John and others who had seen Our Lord; how he related their discourses and what he had heard them say about Our Lord, His miracles and His doctrine. Polycarp related all these things in the style of the Sacred Scriptures themselves, for he had heard them from the mouth of those who had seen with their own eyes the Word of Life. God granted me the grace of listening to these discourses with the greatest attention, and I wrote them, not on paper but on my heart, and by the divine mercy I repeat them continually in my soul."

Article 1.—*St. Ignatius, Martyr.*

Of the apostolic men who heard directly from the disciples the truths of faith and transmitted them to us in their writings, we present, in the first place, St. Ignatius the Martyr. He is said to have been one of the fortunate children whom Jesus embraced,[1] though the Apostles wished to drive them away. It is certain that he was a disciple of the Apostles, and after Evodius succeeded St. Peter in the See of

[1] Mark x. 13 ff.

Antioch. Trajan condemned him to be devoured by wild beasts in Rome, where he suffered his most glorious martyrdom 20th December, 108 or 109 of the Christian era.

A guard of ten soldiers escorted him from Antioch to Rome, and he availed of the time to write several letters, which were preserved as precious relics by the faithful, and which fortunately we still possess. In these letters, together with much more that is sacred and wonderful, we possess the most valuable testimonies to the Eucharist. For instance, the Saint, in his very famous letter to the faithful in Rome, declaring his intense desire to die for Jesus Christ, writes: "I care no longer for corruptible food, nor for the pleasures of this life: I desire only the bread of God, the bread of heaven, *which is the flesh of Jesus Christ*, the Son of God, born of the race of David and Abraham; *I desire the drink of God, His blood*, which is love incorruptible and life without end." In this passage the Saint alludes plainly to the Divine words of the great promise: "He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood hath everlasting life." [1]

In several other letters the glorious confessor of Christ proclaims no less clearly his faith in the Eucharist. To understand the better the force of his words, we must remember that in the lifetime of the Apostles certain heretics, generally styled *Gnostics* (Cerinthus, Basil, Ebion and others) had arisen, who, besides other errors, preached that the Son of God had not taken

[1] John vi. 55.

human flesh, but some sort of a visible, phantom body. St. John condemned them[1] in the sublime opening sentences of his Gospel, and again in his Epistles, and especially in the second,[2] in which he calls them *seducers* and *antichrists*. St. Ignatius condemns them no less strongly in his many letters, as, for instance, when writing to the faithful of Troas: "Those who deny that Christ bore our flesh bring death to themselves."

Those people refrained from participation in that *prayer* in common at which the Eucharist was consecrated and distributed. And this was quite natural, having regard to their heresy, for in those days all who were present at that *prayer* were accustomed to receive Holy Communion, and when receiving used to pronounce a real profession of faith. St. Cyril of Jerusalem, in his admirable Catechisms, describes the manner of receiving Holy Communion, This description was an official instruction, given by St. Cyril, as a priest in Jerusalem, by order of his bishop, at the beginning of the fourth century to the *catechumens*, those newly converted to the faith, for their instruction, as to how they were to receive the Eucharist. The method, somewhat different from that of the present day, is most interesting, and will help us to understand what follows, as well as to illustrate our argument. After the consecration the deacon turned to the people, and addressed to them the sacramental

[1] St. Jerome writes thus, *De Scrip. Eccl. in Ioann.*: "Last of all John wrote the Gospel against Cerinthus and other heretics, especially against the growing doctrine of the Ebionites."

[2] v. 7.

words still in use in some of the Oriental rites: *holy things for the holy; holy things for the saints.* This was the notice and invitation to the faithful to come forward to receive the Eucharist. The following is St. Cyril's instruction to the *Catechumens*: "When you shall have heard the invitation, come to the altar, not with your hands extended nor the fingers spread out; but place your left hand under the right, as if a throne on which to receive the King; and after you shall have received the body of Christ in the hollow of the hand answer: *Amen.*" [1] It is historically certain and beyond question that in the first centuries of the Church the particle of consecrated bread used to be placed on the bare hand of the men, which had been carefully washed, but in the case of women, the hand was covered with a linen cloth or veil. Hence each one communicated himself. It was also permitted, especially in times of persecution, to reserve a portion and to bring it home, to communicate oneself in case that he could not be present at the ordinary *prayer.* We read to the same effect in many places, for instance in Tertullian, *De Oratione*,[2] St. Cyprian,[3] St. Denis of Alexandria, in his letters to Sixtus II, in Eusebius [4]; this we shall also find in subsequent testimonies. When dispensing the particle of consecrated bread the minister used to say: *The body of Jesus Christ*, and the faithful would answer, *Amen*; the word so often used by the

[1] *Catech. Mystag.*, 5, towards the end.
[2] N. 14.
[3] *De Lapsis*, xxii.
[4] *Storia Eccl.*, lib. viii. c. ix.

Redeemer as a supreme affirmation of truth (*Amen, amen, dico vobis*—"In truth, in truth, I say to you") and one which the faithful knew well to be an explicit profession of faith, as if they said: "In truth it is so; this is the Body of the Lord."

A similar method was followed in administering the Communion of the Blood of the Lord. St. Cyril, in his Catechism, continues: "After the Communion of the Body of Christ, come to the chalice of the Lord with hands joined, bow the head as an act of veneration and adoration, and say *Amen*, in order that you may be sanctified in receiving the Blood of Christ." The minister, when presenting the chalice, used to say, "the Blood of Jesus Christ"; and the faithful would answer, *Amen*.

We may easily understand why heretics who denied the reality of the Flesh of the Lord would refrain from participation in the *Prayer* in which so clear a profession of this truth was made.

The force of what St. Ignatius wrote to the faithful of Troas, in treating of the aforesaid heretics, is now clear: "They have not a spark of charity. . . . They abstain from the Eucharist and from the Prayer, because they will not confess that the Eucharist is the Flesh of Our Saviour, Jesus Christ, Who suffered for our sins and was brought to life again through the goodness of the Father. You must, therefore, avoid persons of this class, and not even speak of them in public or in private."

The Saint writes in a similar strain to the

faithful of Magnesia,[1] of Philadelphia,[2] and of Tralles.[3]

Was it possible for St. Ignatius to profess more openly his own faith, which was likewise the faith of the Church, in the presence of the Body and the Blood of the Lord in the Eucharist? In his condemnation of the heretics, precursors of the Calvinists, he proclaimed the Christian dogma in the most unmistakable manner.

But since these heretics held assemblies in which they copied the *Agape* and the Christian Communions, St. Ignatius chides them when warning the faithful to avoid them, declaring that their ceremonies were null and of no value, "for none can be lawfully held but the Eucharist celebrated by the Bishop, and by those licensed by him for this purpose: because there is only one Flesh of Our Lord and one chalice of His Blood." He said this in virtue of the faith that is, was, and ever will be, in the Church, and which insists that heretics separated from the Church can effect no works meritorious for life eternal, whilst to consecrate the Eucharist it is indispensable to possess the power which God gave to the Apostles, and through them to their successors. This power is not found in heretics, who are dead branches torn from the Church.

We, then, see that St. Peter's glorious successor in the chair of Antioch professes clearly the very same faith as the Apostles, and makes an explicit and solemn manifestation of it.

[1] n. 7. [2] n. 4. [3] n. 9.

Article 2.—*St. Justin, Martyr.*

From St. Ignatius we pass to another most celebrated champion of the faith, the philosopher, apologist and martyr—St. Justin. Born in Sichem, Palestine, about the end of the first century, Justin tells us that as a youth, he devoted himself passionately to the study of Pythagorean philosophy, and later to Aristotelian and Platonic systems. One day he was walking alone along the seashore, when his interest was aroused by a mysterious old man whom he met; this man gave him the holy books, both of the Prophets and other Scripture, to read, and recognising therein the true philosophy, his anxiety to find the truth was set at rest. St. Justin, like SS. Polycarp and Irenaeus, was a contemporary of the generation that had seen the Lord and heard the Apostles. The most remarkable of his extant works are the *Dialogue with the Jew Triphon*, and the two defences of Christianity: (*Apologiae*) the first addressed to the Emperor, Antonius Pius, which stayed a persecution[1]; the second to the Emperor, M. Aurelius, was not so successful.

In his first *Apologia*, desiring to dissipate the calumnies that were spread around regarding the assemblies of the Christians, he deemed it a duty to describe briefly the nature of these assemblies. The discipline regarding secrecy was not yet fully regulated; and, moreover, the reason for speaking of the gatherings was imperative.

[1] See Rohrbacher, *Stor. Univ.*, tom. v. lib. 27, pp. 90–1.

In doing so the Saint gives us a very solemn profession of the Eucharistic truth. "When we shall have finished the prayers," he writes, "in the assemblies, we salute one another with a kiss; then we present a cup of wine and water to him who presides over the brethren. He stretches forth his hands to receive them, gives praise and glory to the Father, through the name of the Son and the Holy Ghost, and returns thanks, all this the people confirm by their exclamation: *Amen*, which in Hebrew means 'it is so.' After this those styled deacons distribute to everyone present the bread, the wine and water that had been consecrated by the thanksgiving, and bring them to the absent.

"We call this food Eucharist, of which no one must partake who does not believe in the truth of our doctrine, who has not been cleansed by regeneration and the remission of his sins, and whose life is not in conformity with the precepts of Christ. Because we do not partake of this as ordinary food and drink, and since in virtue of the word of God, Jesus Christ incarnate takes Flesh and Blood for our redemption, we know also that this food, which in the natural order would become our flesh and our blood, being consecrated in the prayer which contains His own divine words, is the Flesh and Blood of the same Jesus made man.

"On the day of the sun (thus the Pagans called the Sunday), all our people, whether they live in the city or the country, assemble in one place, as the weather may permit, and read the commentaries of the Apostles and the works of

the Prophets; and when the reader has finished, the President, in a discourse, exhorts them to imitate these noble examples. After this we all rise together and pray, and then, as we have said, bread, wine, and water are offered; then he who presides prays over them and gives thanks, with all the fervour of which he is capable, and the people answer *Amen*. Next the consecrated particles are distributed to those who are present, and are brought by the deacons to the absent. The rich very willingly make a liberal offering, and the collection is handed over to him who presides, that he may assist widows and children, and those who through sickness or any other cause are in want, as well as prisoners and strangers; indeed all who are in need are his care. We usually assemble on Sunday, because it is the first day of the week, that on which God created the world, brought forth light out of darkness, the day on which Christ rose from the dead, appeared to His disciples and taught them what we have described above."

Here, then, we have a clear synthesis of the liturgy of the Mass in the first half of the second century, identical in substance with that of our own times, together with an undeniable profession of the Christian faith regarding the Eucharist. We must remark that this is an official document, addressed to the highest authority in the empire, by one holding a position of authority in the Church, a document that was not to be published without the permission of the ecclesiastical authority in whose defence it was written, and in which

authority St. Justin probably shared, as is hinted, in the *Acts* of his martyrdom.[1]

St. Justin, in his *Dialogue with the Jew Triphon*, makes a similar profession[2] and maintains that the Eucharist had succeeded the sacrifices of the old law, and was the pure victim, which, according to the prophet Malachy, was to be offered up everywhere after the rejection of the old sacrifices. He then concludes: "This is exactly what the Lord foretold about the bread and the Eucharistic chalice, which, as we have seen, are not ordinary food and drink, but the Flesh and the Blood of the Word of God Incarnate."

Article 3.—*St. Irenaeus, Martyr.*

After St. Justin, and almost his contemporary (he died a few years after him), we have St. Irenaeus, another of the great champions of Christianity in the first centuries, a man whom Tertullian, a keen judge of intellect, styled: "a remarkable explorer of every doctrine,"[3] and whom the historian Eusebius, of Caesarea, and St. Jerome load with praises, especially for his work *Against Heresies*; one who, therefore, is little loved by heretics and by Modernists in our own days. We, with the whole Church and all the most learned therein, should hold him in the highest respect, not only for his sanctity, for his great services to the Church and for his writings, but also, because through the venerable bishop and martyr, St. Polycarp, he

[1] See also D. 50 *supra*. [2] n. 41. [3] *Adv. Valeni.*, n. 36

brings us back, as we stated before, to St. John the Apostle.

In Book IV *Adversus Haereses*, after having shown the futility of the ancient sacrifices, deprived, as they were, of life, the Saint writes: "Our Lord Himself, in urging His disciples to offer to God the first fruits of His creatures not because he needed them, but that they might not be without merit and without gratitude, took bread, which is the work of the Creator, and giving thanks said: 'This is My Body'; and also taking the cup, another work of the Creator, said that it was His Blood; He taught the new oblation of the New Testament, which, having been received by the Apostles, the Church offers to God throughout the whole earth, as the Prophet Malachy declares: 'From the rising of the sun even to the going down, My name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to My name a clean oblation.'

"As those of old had, we have now an oblation. The ancients had their sacrifices, and there are sacrifices in the Church; but the kind of sacrifice is changed, since it is no longer slaves, but free men who offer sacrifice. The Church alone offers that pure oblation to the Creator, offering with thanksgiving His own work. The Jews no longer offer sacrifice; as for the heretics, how could they guarantee that the bread over which thanks have been rendered, is really the Body of their Lord, and the chalice His Blood, when they do not recognise Him as the Son of their Creator?

" How, when they say that the flesh, nourished by the Body and Blood of the Lord, will go into corruption and will not receive life ? (The Saint alludes here to the Gnostics who denied the resurrection of the flesh.) They must change their opinions at once or refrain from making such offerings. Our belief, however, is consistent : inasmuch as seeing that the bread, although coming from the earth, is no longer ordinary bread, after the divine invocation has been pronounced over it, but the Eucharist, and consists of two elements, the one earthly (His Flesh), the other heavenly (His Soul and Divinity) ; so our bodies, after reception of the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, and have the hope of the resurrection.

" Since the chalice (i.e. the wine) when mixed (with water), and the bread when broken, through which our bodies live and grow, receive the word of God, and become the Eucharist of the Body and the Blood of Jesus Christ, how can they say that the body is not susceptible of God's gift, which is life eternal, if it is nourished by the Body and Blood of Christ ? Just as the wood of the vine, which rooted in the ground, bears fruit in due season ; and as the grain of corn that, thrown into the ground, dissolves and springs up and is multiplied by the spirit of God, which sustains all things ; and as afterwards both are turned by man to his own advantage, so they too when they receive the Word of God, become the Eucharist, that is, the Body and the Blood of Jesus Christ ; and our bodies, after they have been nourished by Them, after they

have been buried and have dissolved, will rise again in due course, the Word of God giving them immortality for the glory of God the Father."

We have here a clear and solemn profession of faith in the final resurrection of man after death. Most of the *Gnostics* denied this resurrection. St. Irenaeus defends it, and derives his argument from the fact that our bodies have been nourished and sanctified by the Body and the Blood of Christ—an excellent argument truly, and, at the same time, a grand and solemn profession of faith in the Eucharist. It was impossible to describe in a clearer manner the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, the change of the bread and wine into His Body and His Blood, and the adorable nature of the new sacrifice.

St. Irenaeus, therefore, is another and most authoritative witness to the Christian dogma of the Eucharist. He was so fortunate as to derive this faith from the living voice of St. Polycarp, who had received it from the living voice of the Apostle, St. John, and others who, having lived with Jesus Christ, were immediate witnesses of the great truth. We may remark that Irenaeus was educated in the school of St. Polycarp in Smyrna, that he afterwards went to Gaul and saw that most glorious crown of martyrs whom Lyons honours perpetually; that he was subsequently Bishop of that city and used to go frequently thence to Rome, to treat with the Roman Pontiff on the most important affairs of the Church. The authority of St. Irenaeus is,

therefore, of the highest value and represents to us the faith that was professed not merely in one place, but also in Asia, in Gaul and in Rome.

Article 4.—*Tertullian.*

Tertullian, son of a proconsular centurion in Carthage, was born about the middle of the second century, and was almost a contemporary of St. Irenaeus. He was converted to Christianity when he was thirty years old and, as it appears, was a priest of the Roman Church. He shone as a marvellous light at the end of the second and the beginning of the third centuries. "His words were so many decisions, his decisions so many victories." "He," writes St. Vincent of Lerins,[1] "must indubitably be considered as the prince of the Latin Fathers, for who amongst them was more learned than he? His vast and marvellous intellect embraced the whole history of philosophy, that of each sect, the knowledge of various events, . . . and all the sciences."

Unfortunately his pride drew him away from the true path, and arrayed him against the Roman Church, towards the end of his life—sad and painful aberration of such an illustrious man! It shows how we must live and work *with fear and trembling*. However, we find most precious declarations of belief of the great truth of which we treat in his very numerous writings.

It must be noted with what extreme care Tertullian was accustomed to search out the

[1] *Common.*, lib. i. n. 18.

truth, going back to Apostolic sources. He writes against the heretics in his book of the *Prescriptions* as follows: "Behold the Apostolic churches," he says, "over which still preside the chairs of the Apostles in the very same places where, in listening to the reading of their original Epistles, you will believe that you see them in person and hear the sound of their voices. Are you in Achaia? You have Corinth. In Macedonia? You have Philippi and Thessalonica. Do you pass into Asia? You have Ephesus. Are you on the borders of Italy? You have Rome, to whose authority even we in Africa have recourse. That blessed Church into whose bosom the Apostles poured forth their whole doctrine, as well as their blood! where Peter was crucified like his Master; where Paul was beheaded like St. John the Baptist; where the Apostle John came out safe and sound from the boiling oil, to be afterwards exiled on an island! We behold then what Rome learned and what Rome teaches, and in what she holds special communication with the Churches of Africa." [1]

After these premises Tertullian proceeds to set forth some of the principal teaching of this Church of Rome. He continues thus: "It recognises only one God of the universe: it recognises Jesus Christ, Son of the Creator, born of the Virgin Mary, as also the resurrection of the body; it interweaves the law and the prophets with the Gospels and the Epistles of the Apostles, and draws therefrom that faith which it (the Church)

[1] *Prescrizioni*, n. 36.

countersigns with the water of Baptism, clothes with the Holy Spirit, and *feeds* with the *Eucharist*.

In the book *On Prayer*, when expounding the words of the *Pater:* "Give us this day our daily bread," Tertullian remarks that the principal meaning is the spiritual one, and he applies it to the bread of the Eucharist, in which the Body of Christ is present.[1]

And since some of the faithful on the days of the *Stations* and on fast days, used not to take part in the public *Prayer*, because the divine Sacrifice came to an end with the reception of the Body of the Lord, and they feared that thereby they would break their fast: "How is this," he writes, "will the Eucharist break the worship which you offer to the Lord, or will it not rather render it more perfect? On the contrary, will not your station be more solemn, if you approach the altar of God? Besides, you have but to receive the Body of the Lord and reserve it, and carry it home, as we have said above, that you may partake of it later at the end of your fast: You will thus discharge both duties: you will participate in the sacrifice and discharge your obligation."[2]

Finally, in the book *Ad uxorem*,[3] when exhorting the woman to whom he writes not to marry a Pagan, and commenting on the dangers of such marriages, Tertullian writes: "Will you hide from him (the Pagan husband) when you make the sign of the Cross on your bed or on your body? . . . Will he not know what it is you

[1] Tertullian, *De Oratione*, n. vi.
[2] Ibid. n. xiv.
[3] Idem, *Ad uxorem*, ii. n. 5.

take secretly before every other food? And when he is aware that it is a little bread, will he not believe it to be what the Pagans call it—bread dipped in the blood of a child?" Amongst the many calumnies whereby the populace were aroused against the Christians was this, which was probably invented by the Jews, that they were accustomed to hold suppers *tiestee*; that is, they used to partake of the flesh of a child, or of bread mixed with its blood. This was their horrible and calumnious distortion of the Eucharist, and was very widely propagated. This charge was frequently made against the martyrs, as in the *Acts of the Martyrs of Lyons*,[1] and was by them always denied indignantly and firmly; it was victoriously refuted by the Apologists, and foremost amongst them by St. Justin[2] and Tertullian.[3] We behold the truth of our great Eucharistic mystery shadowed in this horrible distortion. Tertullian records it in his book, *Ad uxorem*.

We must also remark that we find that Communion was taken fasting, *before every other food*, and under a single species incidentally mentioned herein; since in reality the faithful carried only the consecrated bread to communicate themselves.

Article 5.—*Origen.*

Whilst Tertullian was shining in the West, Origen, who was born towards the close of the

[1] Letters from the Church of Lyons to the Churches of Asia.
[2] St. Justin, *Apologia II.*
[3] Tertullian, *Apologeticus*, 39, 14.

second century, was rising to immortal glory in the East.

The discipline of the *Arcanum* (secret) was at that period rigorous, and very rightly so, since unbelievers distorted so shamefully the Christian mysteries. Origen, however, though with some reticence, speaks with sufficient clearness of the Eucharist. In his ninth homily on Leviticus he writes: "He who is initiated knows *the Flesh and the Blood of the Word of God.* Let us, however, not dwell on things that are well known to the initiated, and which must be kept from the uninitiated," that is, from unbelievers and catechumens.

In his eleventh homily on Exodus he utters the warning: "No one must hear the Word of God, unless he be holy in body and in spirit, since he soon after enters the nuptial banquet *to eat the Flesh of the Lamb and to drink the chalice of salvation.*" And he continues: "You who were accustomed to assist at the mysteries know well with what respect and what precautions, lest the smallest particle should fall, you *receive the Body of the Lord;* since, if even the smallest should be lost through your negligence, you would justly consider yourself culpable. The danger of scattering the consecrated species was serious, owing to the method of communicating in the first centuries.

In his *Homily on the Centurion in the Gospel*, Origen writes: "When you take part in the incorruptible banquet, *when you eat the Body and drink the Blood of the Lord*, then He enters under your roof: in humbling yourselves you

then imitate the Centurion and say: ' Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof.' " In the tenth homily on Genesis he writes: " The Christians eat the Flesh of the Lamb *every day*; that is, the Flesh of the Word of God, since our Pasch, Jesus Christ, was immolated."

We can show from other texts how the illustrious writer demonstrates that the Eucharist is the Christian sacrifice; that the Lord is both the victim and the priest who offers the victim[1]; that one who has sinned, even in thought, must, before approaching the Eucharist, confess his fault to the priest of the Lord, that he may become clean.[2] But what we have related so far is sufficient for our purpose.

It is well to recall what Origen remarks as to the practice of daily Communion: *Every day they eat the Flesh . . . of the Word of God.* This holy practice, which was abandoned for centuries owing to the havoc wrought by incredulity, vice and heresy, and especially Jansenism, is being happily resumed in our days. It tends to illustrate Origen's observation regarding confession before Communion, made by such as were conscious of being guilty of sin, even in thought; this we learn also, without naming others, from Tertullian in his work on *The Oratio*, and we shall find it repeated in St. Cyprian's *De lapsis*, in our next article.

[1] Origen, *Hom. V. in Levit.*
[2] Ibid. *Hom. II. in Levit.; Hom. XVII. in Luc.*

Article 6.—*St. Cyprian.*

From the East we return to the West. Here, a few years after Origen, we behold another great light, viz., St. Cyprian, an illustrious writer, zealous bishop and great martyr, as the deacon Pontius styles him, in his biography, written shortly after the Saint's death, and whilst the persecution of Valerian was still raging (anno 258).

The preceding persecution, that of Decius, was initiated in Carthage with the cry, *Cyprian to the lions!* but he was saved by the efforts of the faithful. Many at this time had lapsed, for after a long period of peace their courage had grown weak; and, what was worse, the lapsed, excusing themselves by wretched pretexts, or relying for forgiveness on the intercession which martyrs made for them, dared rashly to assist at and partake of the sacred mysteries.

In presence of this evil the spirit of the Bishop was inflamed by holy zeal, and in the book *De Lapsis*, he wrote as follows to the faithful in Carthage: "Assuredly I do not write to aggravate their condition (the lapsed); but to bring them to repentance. . . . There are some who, turning away from the altars of the demon, approach the altar of the Lord, their hands still stained by impure sacrifices, their mouth still full, so to speak, of the flesh of idols, and they throw themselves on the Body of the Lord, although the Apostle has said: 'Whoever eats the bread and drinks the chalice of the Lord unworthily will be guilty of His Body and Blood.'

"There are some who make nothing of all this; and who, without having atoned for their sins, not having confessed, not having purified their conscience by sacrifice and the hand of the priest, not having appeased the anger of the Lord, do violence to His Body and Blood, and now outrage Him, with the hand (in reference to the manner of communicating at that time) and with the mouth, more even than when they denied Him.

"There are some who rely boldly on the recommendation of the martyrs; but the martyrs wished for nothing against the law, for they died to observe the law of God, not to destroy it. Let us return, then, to ourselves and call to mind that we have never been willing to follow the precepts of the Lord, nor His Commandments." Then, alluding to the lapsed, who pretended that they had been admitted to the sacred mysteries and who indulged in threats, he continues: "What! The lapsed threatens him who remained steadfast! and because the Body of the Lord is not given immediately into his impure hands, and because he is not permitted to drink His Blood with his sacrilegious mouth, the sacrilegious man flies into a passion against the priests! Do you who implore the Lord's mercy dare to threaten? If you do not fear future punishments, at least fear those of the present. How many apostates do we not behold who have met an unhappy end! One is struck dumb, another possessed by the demon becomes his own executioner; this one attempting to communicate amongst the faithful is seized by

horrible convulsions; that one, striving to open the tabernacle[1] in which the Body of the Lord was preserved, sees flames issuing forth.

"Nor should those who did not sacrifice to idols, but who procured a certificate that they had done so,[2] consider themselves dispensed from doing penance; because though their guilt is less, yet they are not innocent. Such people should imitate the God-fearing faith of those who, because of the mere thought of seeking for a certificate in their affliction, made confession thereof to the priests of God. I entreat you, my beloved brothers, while each of you is still in life, whilst his confession may be received, whilst satisfaction is imposed, and pardon is still granted by the priests and accepted by the Lord, make your confession."

Here we see proclaimed, in the most explicit manner, faith in the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, and professed as the common and unquestioned belief of the faithful; moreover, various dreadful chastisements inflicted on profaners of the Eucharist are called to mind.

Passing over other texts, St. Cyprian gives us further solemn testimony of his faith in this mystery in his treatise on the Lord's Prayer. Having called to mind what the words, *Give us this day our daily bread* signify, spiritually and naturally, he shows us how they are to be understood spiritually. The following are his

[1] Allusion is here made to the custom of the early times of bringing the Eucharist home to communicate oneself, if not able to assist at the public *Prayer*.

[2] Several of the faithful used to get a declaration (*libellum*, hence they were called *libellatici*) of having sacrificed to idols.

words: "Seeing that Christ is the bread of life . . . (in the same way as we say *Our Father*, because He is the Father of those who hear and believe Him); so we say *our bread*, because Christ is the bread of those who receive Him." He continues: "We ask that this bread be given to us day by day, lest we, who are in Christ, and who receive the Eucharist every day, as food for salvation,[1] should, by the commission of any grievous offence, and our being, therefore, shut out from Communion and forbidden the heavenly bread, be separated from the Body of Christ, according as He Himself preaches and forewarns: 'I am the Bread of Life Which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this Bread he shall live for ever, and the Bread that I will give is My Flesh for the life of the world.'

"Seeing, therefore, He says that if any man eat of His Bread he shall live for ever; it follows that while it is manifest that those do thus live who belong to His Body and receive the Eucharist by right of Communication (that is worthily), so is it a subject both for our fears and prayers, that none of us, by being forbidden Communion, be separated from the Body of Christ and so remain far from salvation, since He Himself threatens and declares: 'Unless you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, you shall not have life in you.' Hence, then, we pray that our Bread, which is Christ, may be given to us day by day, so that abiding in it we may

[1] From this and other writings of the first centuries, and to the permission to the faithful to bear the Eucharist to their homes, we know that frequent and even Daily Communion was practised, and that the Church in recommending it to-day is but restoring the practice of Apostolic times.

not be driven away from His sanctification and from His Body." [1]

Thus did a great Bishop instruct the faithful at the beginning of the third century. Thus, too, in the twentieth century, every bishop and every minister of the Catholic Church speaks and teaches: ever one and the same, is the faith from Jesus Christ till the end of the world!

Article 7.—*St. Stephen, Pope.*

St. Cyprian was martyred in the fierce persecution of Valerian, on 14th September, 258. Pope St. Stephen suffered his martyrdom in Rome in the same persecution, on 2nd August. Having been conducted, by order of Valerian, to the Temple of Mars, that he might offer sacrifice to that idol; at the prayer of the holy Pontiff, the edifice tottered, as if shaken with an earthquake, and was partly ruined; the soldiers and the guards fled in terror: and St. Stephen, finding himself free, escaped with his people to the catacombs. Pursued shortly afterwards by the soldiers, it was found that "he was offering the Sacrifice of the Most High," and while so engaged was slain on the episcopal chair on which he was seated. His body was buried, together with the episcopal chair stained with his blood, on the spot. Such is the account in the *Acts of the Martyrs*, 2nd August, and in Baronius *ad annum* 252-259.

Here we find that the Roman Pontiff "offers sacrifice to the Most High," no other certainly

[1] St. Cyprian, *Orat. Dom.* xiii.

than that of which St. Justin, Origen, St. Irenaeus and St. Cyprian speak; namely, the Sacrifice of the Mass.[1]

Article 8.—*St. Tarcisius.*

In the death of St. Tarcisius, in the same persecution of Valerian, we find another testimony to the Eucharist. An Acolyte in the Roman Church, the Saint was one day carrying the Sacred Species to those who had not been able to assist at the public Prayer which was celebrated by the Bishop. A group of fanatical Pagans who chanced to meet him, suspecting that he was bearing *the Christian mysteries*, assailed him with great violence to force him to deliver them up. In vain. He allowed himself to be killed, and, according to tradition, the Pagans could not find the Eucharist. This event became celebrated in the Church, and Pope Damasus immortalised it in one of his celebrated epigraphical verses as follows :

Blessed Tarcisius shrining on reverent breast Christ
in the Sacrament,
Sieged by a rabid rout, ravening to desecrate
that which he fondles,
True to his sacred trust, fain would allay their hate
by his own person :
So did that canine crew dew with his youthful blood,
Christ's heavenly members.[2]

[1] In the *Acts* of the Martyrs, Hippolitus, Adrian and others (which Baronius shows to be authentic) we also read that after St. Stephen had baptised them and celebrated the Holy Sacrifice, he admitted them to Holy Communion.

[2] "Tarcisium sanctum, Christi sacramentum gerentem
Cum male sana manus peteret vulgare profanis ;
Ipse animam potius voluit dimittere caesus,
Prodere quam canibus rabidis cælestia membra."

Here is the Christian faith: the Most Holy Sacrament is called in poetic phrases, sublimely expressive, the Sacrament of Christ, and "the heavenly members," that is the members of Jesus Christ, in other words, His Divine Body.

Article 9.—*St. Dionysius of Alexandria.*

This great Bishop, in 260–261, wrote to Pope St. Sixtus to ask for his opinion on a doubt by which he was troubled. One of the faithful, who had been baptised by certain heretics, feared that he had not been validly baptised and asked St. Dionysius, as his Bishop, to administer the sacrament to him again. "I," wrote the holy Bishop to the Pope, "did not dare to consent, telling him that the long period spent by him in the communion of the Church was sufficient; for, having heard the consecration of the Eucharist, and answered *Amen* with the others, after having stood at the table and stretched out his hand to receive the holy food, and after having partaken of the Body and the Blood of the Lord for a long time, as he had done, I would not dare to begin to initiate him anew. So I have comforted him, and given him courage to approach with firm faith and strong hope to participation in the holy mysteries."[1] And then he asked St. Sixtus if he had replied correctly.

Here, then, is a new and solemn manifestation, not only of the rite of the Holy Communion, but also of the living faith in the Eucharist:

[1] Eusebius, lib. vii. c. xi.

the holy food is no other than participation in the Body and the Blood "of Our Lord." This is said as an indisputable fact by a great Bishop, as was St. Dionysius, to a holy Pope.

Article 10.—*The Council of Nice.*

The third century closed with the great persecution, which was known *par excellence* by the title of the *era of the martyrs*, and was so memorable that many acts were dated therefrom. Diocletian, Maximinian, Maxentius, Galerius and Maximinus Daia, fierce tyrants and persecutors, perished miserably one after the other, manifestly stricken by God; so that Galerius and Daia in terror recognised, as formerly Antiochus did, the hand that struck them down. Constantine and Licinius, warned by portentous signs from God (*impulsu divinitatis*) and persuaded of the justice and strength of the Christian religion, now that the persecuting tyrants were overcome, issued decrees of toleration and favour for the Church; at first in Rome, in 312, and later in Milan, in 313. Availing of the period of peace, on 15th June, 325, Bishops to the number of 318, under the presidency of legates of the Roman Pontiff, and the auspices of Constantine, met for the first Ecumenical Council in Nice, to discuss some questions which had arisen in the Church, as already mentioned. Nothing had ever been seen or imagined like this. Here was an assembly of saints and confessors, many of whom still bore on their persons the marks of the persecutions.

In addition to the Bishops there were also present priests and deacons, the flower of the Christian race, assembled for the noblest purposes.

Amongst the questions for decision by the Council was that regarding the deacons who wished to discharge priestly duties by claiming to administer the Eucharist to priests. The Council forbade this to be done—and we note, because of the subject of which we treat—the Council, in condemning this disciplinary irregularity, made a clear profession of Eucharistic faith. Canon 14 is as follows: "The holy Council has become aware that in some places and cities deacons administer the Sacraments to priests. It has not been handed down to us by custom or by law, that those who are not empowered to offer the Sacrifice should bear it to those who offer the *Body of Christ*." Such, then, is the faith of this venerable and infallible assembly: "The priests (it is stated) are those who celebrate the holy sacrifice in which *the body of Christ* is offered."

Article II.—*The Post-Nicene Fathers.*

After this very explicit profession on the Eucharist from a Council composed of so many confessors of the faith and saints, it would appear to be unnecessary to quote what subsequent Fathers and Doctors of the Church have written regarding the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. Amongst the Greeks who most distinguished themselves in the early times,

after the Council of Nice, must be mentioned St. Cyril of Jerusalem (died anno 386), Sts. Gregory of Nyassa, John Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria, Anastasius Sinaita, and later, St. John Damascene; amongst the Latins St. Hilary of Poitiers, St. Ambrose, author of the book *De Sacramentis*, and St. Augustine. We shall give some quotations from these authorities.

Article 12.—*St. Cyril of Jerusalem.*

Born in Jerusalem or the neighbourhood in 315, while the words and works of Jesus Christ were still vividly remembered, he was ordained priest in 345 by Bishop Maximus, and by him was commissioned to preach the Word of God. He himself informs[1] us that he used to preach to the faithful every Sunday.

It was at that time that he wrote his celebrated *Catechisms* and the *Mystagogical Catechisms*, for the instruction of the Catechumens, that is those who, after having been recently converted, were preparing to receive Baptism.

He succeeded Maximus as Bishop of Jerusalem in 350. God illustrated his episcopacy by two great miracles; the great luminous cross that appeared in the heavens (at the beginning of his episcopacy) at 9 o'clock in the morning, and which reached from Calvary to Mount Olivet; and the huge globes of fire that issued from Moriah, and prevented the Jews, assisted by Julian the Apostate, from re-building their famous Temple, and thus belying (as they presumed) the Word of Jesus Christ.

[1] *Catech. V.*, 10, 14.

The testimony of this saint and most celebrated Bishop and Father of the Church, for all these events, is testimony of the highest order.

What his faith was in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist we have seen in Chapter III from his commentaries on the words employed in the institution of this Sacrament, and again in Chapter V, in his instruction to catechumens on the manner of receiving Communion—*the King*—as he so writes. The whole of his *Mystagogical Catechism IV* is a monument of his faith; we shall quote a few of his statements: "One day He (Our Lord) changed water into wine, which is like to blood in a certain sense; and may we not then believe that He changed wine into blood? Wherefore, we take (Communion) with perfect certainty as the Body and Blood of Christ, since under the appearance of bread the Body is given to us and the Blood under the appearance of wine; so that when you have taken the Body and Blood of Christ you become participators in His very Body and Blood. Thus we become bearers of Christ, Whose Body and Blood we have received in our members. . . . Do not, therefore, regard them as mere bread and wine; since they are the Body and the Blood of Christ. Although the senses may tell you this, faith, however, assures you quite differently. Do not judge by the taste; for beyond all doubt faith certifies to you that you have been deemed worthy of participating in the body and the Blood of Christ." These words are authoritative. Thus do we, too, express ourselves

thus does the Council of Trent speak of this Sacrament, and from century to century, back to the time of Jesus Christ, we find that He Himself employs the same terms. This is the language of faith in Our Lord's real presence in the Eucharist.

Article 13.—*St. Ambrose.*

St. Ambrose, the great Bishop of Milan, died in the West in 397, ten years after St. Cyril. Of his faith and his teaching we learn from many sources, as well as in the book *De Mysteriis*, 50, in which, when treating of the Eucharist, he writes: "It is really the Body and the Blood, because through the divine omnipotence the bread and the wine are changed into the Body and the Blood of Christ. Perhaps you will say: 'I see something quite different; how can you assure me that I receive the Body of Christ?'" The Saint replies by an appeal to the divine omnipotence; he recalls the changing of the rod of Moses into a serpent, and back again to a rod; the change of water into wine, etc., and then continues: "If Man's benediction could accomplish such wonders, as to change the nature of things, what may be said of the benediction of God, when the very words of the Divine Saviour are employed? This Sacrament which you receive is effected through the words of Christ. If the words of Elias made fire descend from heaven, will not the words of Christ be able to effect a change of elements? You have read of His works in the universe. *He spoke and they were*

made; He commanded and they were created. Such were the words of God, Who can bring forth from nothing what had no existence. Is He, then, not able to change existing things into what they were not before? Surely creating is not less than changing the nature of things . . . Why do you seek for the natural order in the body of Christ, since He was born of the Virgin out of the natural order? The same Lord exclaims: '*This is My Body.*' Before the Benediction with the heavenly words it is called differently; after the Consecration it is called *the Body.* He says "My Blood." Before the consecration it is named otherwise, after the consecration it is called *blood.* And you say *Amen*, that is, it is true. What the mouth proclaims the mind professes interiorly; what speech expresses, the heart feels . . . Christ is there in that Sacrament; because the body of Christ is not a corporal (material) food, but spiritual."

In the book *De Sacramentis*,[1] at one time attributed to St. Ambrose, but now to an unknown author of the same period, we find a similar mode of speech. "You say it is ordinary bread. But this bread is bread before the sacramental words. At the consecration, from bread it becomes the Body of Christ. This, then, we hold. How is it possible that what is bread may become the Body of Christ? By the consecration. And in what words and in what language is the consecration? The Lord Jesus. . . .

[1] *De Sacram.* lib. iv. cc. 4. 5.

"What is the language of Christ? Just that by which everything was made. The Lord commanded and the heavens were made: the Lord commanded and the earth sprang into being: the Lord commanded and all creatures were born. You see then how powerful are the words of Christ. If in the words of the Lord Jesus there is such power as to create and give existence to what had previously no existence, how much more effective may these words not be to change what exists into something different? You have learned that you receive the Body of Christ. . . . The Lord Himself asserts that you receive His Body and Blood. Can it be that we doubt His truthfulness and His testimony? . . . Not in vain then dost thou say *Amen*, thereby confessing with the mind that you receive the Body of Christ. The priest says to you: *Corpus Christi* (the body of Christ), and you answer *Amen*, it is true. What is confessed by the tongue let the soul retain.

Article 14.—*St. Augustine.*

We come finally to St. Augustine. From him we have the celebrated words: "O venerable dignity of priests, in whose hands, as in the womb of the Virgin, the Son of God takes Flesh!" —*O veneranda sacerdotum dignitas in quorum manibus, sicut in utero Virginis, Filius Dei incarnatur!* From him likewise we get the celebrated words about the Eucharist: "I dare to say that God in His omnipotence could not give

more, in His wisdom He knew not how to give more, in His riches He had not more to give" —*Audeo dicere, quod Deus, cum esset omnipotens plus dare non potuit, cum esset sapientissimus plus dare nescivit, cum esset ditissimus plus dare non habuit.*[1] St. Augustine could not write thus unless he professed that Christ gave Himself entirely in the Eucharist; since then only is it shown that He could give no more.

We know also what the Saint writes in his Confessions about his mother's death, and her request that he should remember her at the altar of the Lord. All this may be found in Book IX, c. xiii, n. 5, and also in n. 2, c. 2, Book VI, on "Oblations" (because it refers to *Masses*) on the tombs of martyrs. This alone would be sufficient to prove the faith of this great Doctor.

Since Calvin and his unhappy followers claim St. Augustine as one who had no clear ideas on the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, it is necessary to remember that in the Saint's time the *law of the secret* was still maintained in Africa. This law obliged the faithful not to divulge to unbelievers, and not even to catechumens until the completion of their instruction, the more sublime mysteries of the faith, and especially that of the Eucharist. This is historically certain, and we know it from St. Augustine himself. In his commentary in *Tract II in Ioann.*, writing of that passage of the Gospel in which it is stated that Jesus Christ did not trust Himself unto the Jews—*Jesus*

[1] *Tract* 84 *in Ioann.*

non se credebat eis—although they trusted unto Him, the holy Doctor writes thus: "Such are the Catechumens: they already believe in the name of Jesus; but Jesus does not trust Himself to them. It is well to reflect on and understand this. If we shall say to the Catechumen: Dost thou believe in Christ? . . . he will reply: I believe, . . . and makes the sign of the Cross, and is not ashamed of the Cross of Our Lord. Hence he believes in His name. We ask him: Dost thou eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink the Blood of the Son of Man? . . . He does not understand what we mean; because Jesus has not yet been given to him."[1]

Here, to an assembly of the faithful, fully initiated into the doctrines of Christianity, St. Augustine recalls a well-known and undisputed fact, namely, that the Catechumens, although introduced to Christianity and believing in Christ, did not understand what the others fully understood, and in reply to the question: "Dost thou eat the Flesh, dost thou drink the Blood of the Son of Man" (that is, of Jesus Christ), did not know what to answer. This was because of the *law of the secret*. The Catechumens were not instructed in the Sacrament of the Eucharist until at the close of their instruction; this is

[1] "*Ecce illi crediderant in eum, et Jesus non se credebat eis.*—Tales sunt omnes catecumeni: ipsi iam credunt in nomine Christi, sed Jesus non se credit eis. Intendat et intelligat caritas vestra. Si dixerimus catecumeno: Credis in Christum? . . . respondet: Credo . . . et signat se cruce Christi et non erubescit de cruce Domini sui. Ecce credit in nomine ejus. Interrogemus eum: Manducas carnem Filii hominis, et bibis sanguinem Filii hominis? . . . nescit quid dicimus; quia Jesus non se credidit ei."

historically certain, and is also inferred from the *Catechisms* of St. Cyril of Jerusalem as already quoted.

What a striking proof of the great Doctor's faith in the Eucharist, as also of the assembly of the believers! In the Holy Communion they eat and drink the Body and Blood of the Lord. What more explicit statement can be desired?

But we must observe another circumstance to understand fully St. Augustine. In some places he contrasts the material and the spiritual participation in the Body of Jesus Christ: for instance, in *Tract 27 in Ioann.*, cap. vi., he writes: "Many *materially* eat and drink the Sacraments with us, whilst in the end they will endure eternal torments." This is entirely different from a denial of the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist; it is, in fact, the repetition in different words of what St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "whosoever eats unworthily the Body of Christ, eats and drinks his own condemnation."

What bad faith, what subversion of the truth in Calvin and his followers, when they represent St. Augustine as being in doubt, and even opposed to the dogma of the real presence in the Eucharist. On the contrary, in many places he is its invincible supporter and exponent.

What else might be expected from the disciple of St. Ambrose, of the successor and admirer of St. Cyprian, of the great champion of Grace who in mind and heart was united to Rome?

* * *

Here we pause; so many, so explicit and so peremptory are the testimonies of Doctors, theologians, saints and councils, so numerous the books of devotion and rituals in all the centuries down to our own time, that even heretics do not dare to doubt as to the profession of faith of the Catholic Church in the real presence of Our Lord in the Eucharist.

CHAPTER VI.

Ancient Monuments of the Eucharist.

Under the name of monuments of the Eucharist are included pictures, symbolical inscriptions and stones, which call to mind this mystery. They are found in profusion on the Christian sepulchres in the cemeteries of the first centuries; that is to say, in the catacombs. These reminders are chiefly frescoes on the plastering of the rough walls of the hollowed out living rock of tufa, or inscriptions on the tombs. A mystic language generally prevails in the monuments and pictures, for how else could this great Sacrament be represented? Even at the present day we represent it by the symbols of the chalice and the host. In those days, the law of secrecy being in existence towards all but members of the Church, symbolism had necessarily to be still more secret. Yet, as we shall see, it was sufficiently significant.

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The first symbol that is found in the most ancient parts of the catacombs, such as the vestibule of Flavius and the crypt of Ampliatus, in the cemetery of Domitilla, towards the close of the first century, is the vine. This symbol is employed either because the wine for the holy sacrifice is produced from the vine, or because it recalls the divine discourse of the Lord after the Last Supper, when He was about

to set out for Gethsemani: "I am the true vine"—*Ego sum vitis vera*.[1] The vine, according to all the archaeologists, is a symbol of Our Lord and of the Eucharist.

This symbol becomes still more significant when it is found with a dove flying towards a chalice, or pecking at the bunch of grapes on the mystic vine. It is plain that the dove represents the soul of the faithful which is fed on the Eucharistic mystery.

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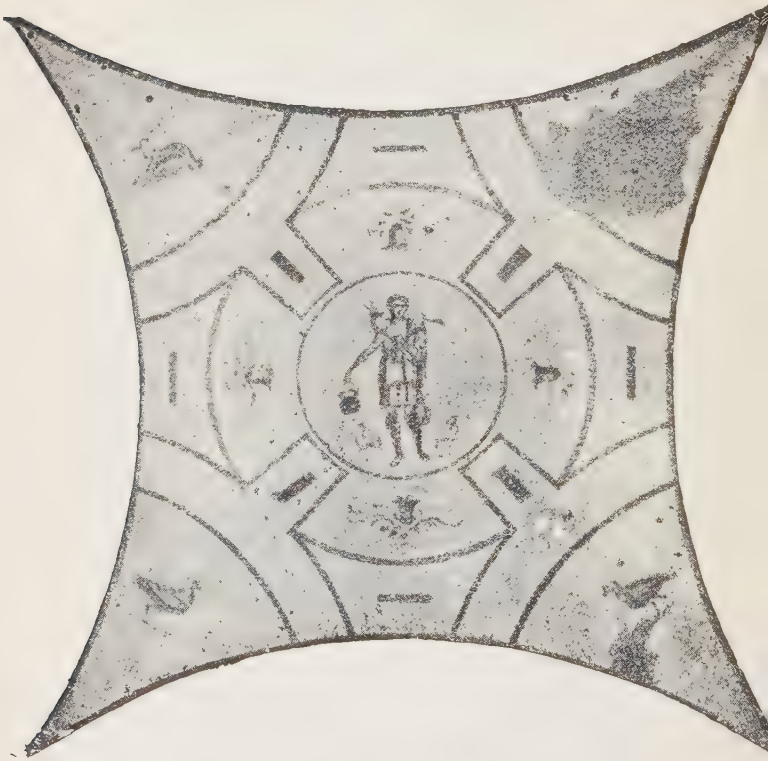
Next comes the *Good Shepherd* with a pail of milk, as seen in a cubicle in the cemetery of Callistus. Similar to this symbol is another in the same cemetery, namely a pail of milk laid on an altar, near which are two sheep; a very significant group showing the Eucharistic milk substituted for the Shepherd Himself in the midst of His sheep, and the Eucharistic altar surrounded and guarded by the faithful.

We have an illustration of this symbol in the marvellous *Acts* of St. Perpetua, written by herself in prison up to the day of her martyrdom. Being in prison "my brother came to me," she writes, "and said to me, 'My sister and lady, you are now in such great favour with the Lord that you may ask Him to grant you a vision whereby you may know whether you shall be martyred or liberated from prison.' I, who was accustomed to speak familiarly with God and who had received so many benefits from Him, confidently replied to my brother: 'Return

[1] John xvi. 1 ff.

to-morrow and you will know.' I then prayed and He showed me the following vision. I saw a golden ladder of very great height, which



The Good Shepherd with the Vessel of Milk, in the Crypt of Lucina.

reached from earth to heaven, but so narrow that people could ascend only one by one. Along the two sides were fixed all kinds of pointed and edged weapons, swords, spears, hooks, scythes, knives—all so arranged that whoever would ascend carelessly, not looking up,

would be cut to pieces by these weapons, and would leave on them much of his flesh. At the foot of the ladder a dragon of huge bulk was crouched, on the watch to attack anyone who stepped on the ladder, or to frighten those who desired to ascend. Saturus (that brother who was not with us when we were seized, and who afterwards, for our sakes, had given himself up voluntarily, and had taught us [1]) was the first to ascend the ladder, and from the top he turned to me and said: 'Perpetua, I await you here, but take care that the dragon does not bite you.' I replied to him: 'He will do me no harm, no, none, in the name of Jesus.' Then the dragon, as if he was afraid of me, raised his head gradually from under the foot of the ladder and I walked on it, as if it were the first step. When I reached the top, I found myself in an immense garden, in the midst of which was seated a mighty man with white hair and dressed as a shepherd. He was milking the sheep. Around Him were thousands of people dressed in white. Raising His eyes He looked at me and said: 'You are welcome, My daughter.' Calling me to Him He gave me a large quantity of the curdled milk which He had obtained. Stretching out my hands I received it; and all who were standing around Him replied, *Amen*. At the sound of this word *I* awoke, still eating something extraordinarily sweet. I immediately related the vision to my brother, and he understood well what it meant;

[1] Some, such as Felicitas and Revocatus, were seized as Christians and led to prison, though they were still catechumens.

that is, that we would be martyred: and from that hour we gave up all hope in this world."

The ladder, full of pointed and edged weapons, that reached to heaven, clearly signified martyrdom. Saturus attained to it in reality, for he was the first slain. The huge dragon at the foot of the ladder was the demon who tries to prevent the martyrs from professing their faith. The white-haired shepherd in the great garden and surrounded by thousands of people clad in white, was Jesus, Whom the faithful represented under the image of the *Good Shepherd*, with one or more sheep. The people clad in white were the blessed, who have reached their happy country. The sweet curdled milk, which Perpetua received with joined hands while the blessed around answer *Amen*, was evidently the Holy Communion which the martyrs were anxious to receive before martyrdom, and which was received while saying, *Amen*.

This striking illustration of the Shepherd with the pail of milk, or of the pail of milk on the sacred altar, was figurative of the Eucharist.

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The fish is another more secret and solemn symbol of the Eucharist. Some remarks are necessary in explanation.

The word *fish*, in Greek *ιχθυς*[1] (Greek was the usual language of those times), was a hieroglyphic for the name of the Saviour, since the word *ichtus* contained the initial letters of the well-known phrase *Jesus Christus Filius Dei*

[1] Ἰησοῦς Χριστός Θεοῦ Υἱός Σωτήρ —(Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour.)

Salvator. Thus in the famous catacombs of Priscilla, in Rome, is found the inscription: *Alexander in*, and then the figure of a fish, which is evidently substituted for *Christo*, according to the ritual phrase that used be inscribed on the tombs of the faithful: *Alexander* (or other name) *in Christo*.

Baptism by immersion was then customary; and the baptised faithful considered themselves as buried with Jesus *in death* in the sepulchre, to rise again from the holy waters to a new life, the Christian life of grace and salvation. *Consepulti enim sumus cum Illo per baptismum in mortem, ut . . . in novitate vitae ambulemus*—"For we are buried together with Him by baptism into death . . . that we may walk in newness of life," wrote St. Paul to the Romans,[1] and also in the same sense to the faithful Colossians.[2] Immersion to be followed by resurrection to a new life naturally prompted the idea of the fish, which in its own element, outside the world, glides about full of life. Hence the faithful were compared to the little fish born in the waters of Baptism to a new life, and Jesus was *the great fish*, the author of this new life. On a column found in the Vatican catacombs was a large fish, and under it the words *the fish of the living*. But nothing shows more clearly that the primitive Christians represented Our Divine Redeemer by the emblem of the fish than the words of Tertullian in his book on *Baptism*, Sec. I: "We are little fishes (*pisciculi*) who, by favour of Jesus Christ, are born

[1] vi. 4. [2] ii. 12.

in the water; and by remaining in the water we are saved," Born to grace in holy Baptism through the merits of Jesus Christ, we can be saved only by remaining in these waters of grace.

We may add that the fish figures twice in the Gospels with special relation to Jesus Christ and to the Eucharist. In the multiplication of the loaves in the desert fish is added to the bread, the symbol of the wonderful Sacrament. And in the appearance of Jesus after His resurrection by the lake of Tiberias, when the group of Apostles who had gone to fish perceived that Jesus is on the shore, they hasten to Him, and for their food find bread and also a fish on a fire that had been kindled. And St. Augustine remarks, *piscis assus Christus est passus*—" the broiled fish is Christ crucified."

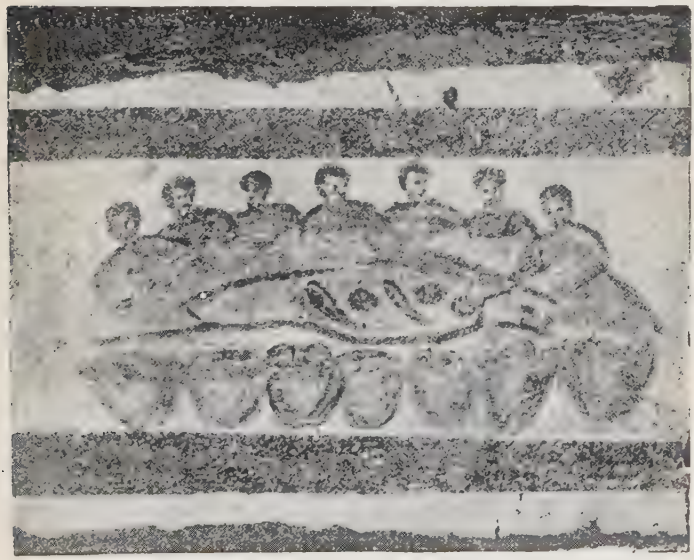
There is, therefore, no doubt that in the language and in the monuments of the first Christian centuries that the fish was a symbol and mystical figure of Our Redeemer.

We are, therefore, satisfied as all archaeologists admit, that the faith of the early Christians is symbolised by pictures in several places in the Roman catacombs. We shall describe some of them.

A group of people, generally seven (a symbolic number for a multitude), is seated at a table on which is bread, and together with the bread is a fish. Two such scenes are depicted in the pontifical cemetery of Callistus, the principal of the cemeteries: archaeologists consider these pictures to belong to the third century.

In the cemetery of Priscilla there is a similar,

but more significant scene, and one which, from the character of the painting is believed to belong to the second century. The bearded personage at the table in the centre is in the act of *breaking* the bread, an evident reminder of the Eucharistic rite.

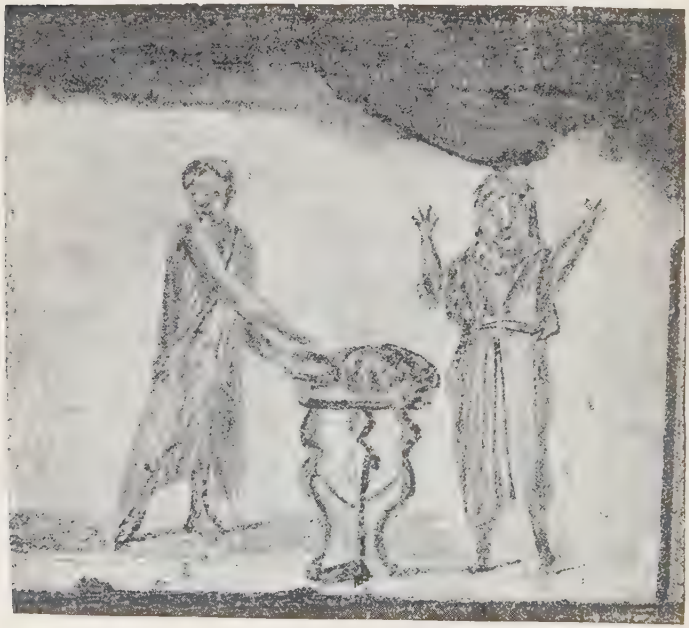


The Eucharistic Banquet (Third Century).

In the cemetery of Callistus is a still more significant picture. A man wearing a cloak stands erect before a tripod, on which are placed bread and a fish; his right hand is extended towards the tripod in the act of blessing; and in front is the figure of a woman with arms raised in the ordinary attitude of prayer. It is evidently the consecrating act of the Bishop

or priest, in presence of the assembly of the faithful, represented by a woman in prayer.

It is to be noted that before the tables thus furnished are seen, nearly always, some osier baskets heaped up with bread. We know that



The Eucharistic Consecration (Third Century).

in times of persecution, either to conceal the better the divine mysteries, or for convenience, the Eucharist used be brought to the houses or to the assemblies of the faithful in osier baskets. St. Jerome records this clearly in his letter to Rusticus: "*Nihil illo diutius quam qui corpus Domini in canistro portat vimineo, et san-*

guinem ejus in vitro—"There is no one earlier (more solicitous) than he who carries the Body of the Lord in the osier basket, and His Blood in the glass vessel."

Most convincing, finally, is the picture in the most ancient part of the cemetery of Callistus, named the *crypt of Lucina*. The fresco, in Pompeian style, cannot be later than the beginning of the second century. A fish bears on its back a basket filled with bread, in the midst of which is seen the gleam of a vessel of wine. Place this picture side by side with that bearing the fish, as above described, the image of Jesus Christ, and recall the custom in times of persecution of carrying the sacred species to the faithful in osier baskets and glass vessels, and all doubt as to the significance of this picture will disappear.

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Again, we have two inscriptions of the early times (disregarding many lesser and later ones) one of the *Eastern* Church, the other of the *Western* Church, which we call a counterproof and an illustration of the Eucharistic symbols described in this chapter.

The first is the sepulchral inscription of Abercius, Bishop of Hierapolis, in Phrygia, in the time of Marcus Aurelius (161–180), the text of which is known from the *Acts* of this saint, published by Metaphrastes and the Bollandists. Two pieces of the marble stone bearing this epigraph have been recently brought to light, and are preserved in the Christian Museum

of the Lateran.[1] We give the translation of the inscription: "I am Abercius, disciple of the Immaculate Shepherd Who feeds His flock through the mountains and valleys, and Who has large eyes that see everything. He taught me the doctrine of life, and sent me to Rome to contemplate a kingdom, or a queen clad in gold, and wearing golden shoes: here I saw a people adorned by a splendid sign. I saw the plains of Syria and of Nisibus near the Euphrates, and everywhere I found brethren united together![2] . . . And faith was always my guide and gave me as food the *great fish*, which the chaste Virgin took from the spring; and possessing most excellent wine, gave food to its friends, serving them with wine mixed with water along with bread."

In dealing with a sepulchral device that was before the eyes of the pagans, it is plain that it was not prudent to speak too openly. But (remarks the illustrious Professor Marucchi), "Who does not recognise in these words of Abercius the same idea that guided the painters in the catacombs, in their representations of the bread and fish, together with the cup of wine? Who, when reading this verse, does not recall the celebrated fresco in the cemetery of Callistus of the Eucharistic consecration, in which is served the bread and fish, and in which the matron in prayer, while representing the

[1] See Marucchi, *Bulletin of Christian Archaeology*; Rome, Spithoever, 1895, n. 1.

[2] In Syria, and especially in Nisibus, flourishing Christian Communities existed which Bishop Abercius, as was then customary, wished to visit.

Church also symbolises Faith, which offers to Christians, according to the expression of Abercius, the divine food? What else can the words signify, 'Faith gave me as food the *great fish* which the chaste Virgin took from the spring,' but Jesus Christ and the most holy Eucharist?"

Fish and Eucharistic Elements in the Tomb of Lucina.

Similar language appears on another epigraph of the second century, that was discovered in Autun, in France. A Christian named Pettorius, to whom the inscription belongs, turns, as is plain, to his friends and associates, and says: "O divine race of the *heavenly fish* always keep the heart pure, and here amongst mortals receive the immortal spring of waters.—O friend, make thy soul pure with the wealth-giving water of wisdom.—Receive the sweet food as honey of

the Saviour of the Saints, partake of it with great desire, holding the *fish* in thy hands."

Here again is mention made of the fish; and the faithful are called a race; that is, descendants of the *heavenly fish*, that is Jesus Christ, according to the well-known symbol. They are then invited to partake *of food as sweet as honey*, which can be no other than the Eucharist, as we know from the letter of St. Perpetua, and so many other writings and figures. Here also, more clearly and more precisely, these words indicate: *the food sweet as honey of the Saviour of the Saints.* The final inscription in this epigraph is still more remarkable: "*Eat with great desire, holding the fish in thy hands*," when we remember that in the first centuries the Eucharistic bread was put into the hands of the faithful, and then they communicated themselves. Hence these words, unintelligible to the profane, and veiled by the law of the secret, were quite clear for the faithful, and meant precisely: "When the fish (Christ) will be placed in thy hands, eat with great ardour."

"The wonderful correspondence of the two inscriptions of Abercius and Pettorius with the monuments in the Roman catacombs, shows us (continues Marucchi) the perfect agreement on the dogma of the Eucharist, between the Eastern and the Western Churches from the second century." And so from the monuments left to us from that remote age, we have a beautiful and consoling confirmation of what the martyrs and the glorious Fathers of the first centuries have transmitted to us regarding the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.

CHAPTER VII.

The Sacred Liturgy.

It is a well-known axiom that the manner of praying is the rule for believing: *modus orandi est regula credendi;* inasmuch as the manner in which one prays is an indication and the rule of what one believes; *Legem credendi lex statuat supplicandi*, wrote St. Innocent I in his letter to the Bishops of Gaul (c. 11). This is true for every prayer approved of by the Church, and is especially true for the solemn, liturgical prayers which the Church has prescribed in the administration of the sacraments, particularly the Sacraments of Holy Orders and the Eucharist, the two sacraments that have particular relation to our subject, the real presence of Our Lord in the Eucharist. Let us see, therefore, the special prayers or expressions used by the Church in the administration of Holy Orders and the Blessed Eucharist.

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It is historically certain, as Epiphanius affirms,[1] that the Apostles arranged the *manner of celebrating the divine mysteries*, after having been instructed and ordered by the Lord to do so. Hence St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians as to the manner of celebrating the Most Holy Eucharist: "I have received of the Lord that

[1] *Haereses*, 79, n. 3.

which also I delivered unto you."[1] St. Clement admonished the Corinthians in his celebrated letter on the same subject: *Cuncta ordine debemus facere quae nos Dominus iussit peragere*—"We must do everything according to the order which the Lord established." This reminds us of St. Paul's prescription: *Omnia secundum ordinem fiant*—"Everything must be done according to order." St. Innocent I, in his letter to Decentius, Bishop of Gubbio (19th March, 416); St. Celestine I, to the Bishops of Gaul (an. 422 432); Pope Vigilius, to Profuturus and other Bishops of Spain (an. 538) and others, repeat the same injunction.

It is also well known that there are various rites in the sacred liturgy for the celebration of the divine mysteries. Duchesne[2] tells of four groups: the Syriac and the Alexandrine, the Gallican and the Roman, and he adds that the Syriac is somewhat like the Gallican[3] and the Alexandrine like the Roman. Hence these rites, or different forms of the sacred liturgy, might be substantially reduced to two, the Eastern and the Western. But still these two forms, like the liturgies of all rites, while varying in language and secondary details, agree in substance.

For instance we have seen[4] that from the beginning, the evening was the time for the divine mysteries, *the breaking of bread*, and the

[1] 1 Cor. xi. 23.

[2] *Origines des Cultes chrétiens.*

[3] This is natural because of the manifold relations then existing between Marseilles and Gaul with Syria and Palestine. We need only call to mind St. Irenaeus. The Gallican rite is now but a memory, for the Latin rite has superseded it.

[4] *Supra*, Chapter iv.

celebration took place after the *Agape*, or Supper of the Lord. Afterwards, and even in the lifetime of many of the Apostles, it (*Fractio panis*) began to be separated from the *Agape*, and to be carried out whilst those present were fasting. From St. Justin[1] and others we have learned that the *Pax* was given after the lessons and prayers preceding the offertory, and that all present received it; whilst now the *Pax* is after the Consecration, and is confined to the clergy. The *memento* for the living, in the Latin Church, is made before the Consecration; in the Greek liturgy it is made after, and before that of the dead.

The substantial part of the Mass, which we call the *Canon*, and the Greeks *Anafora*, is identical in nearly all the rites. We have irrefutable proof of this from the schismatical and heretical sects of the East, which, while differing and even separating from the Catholic Church on some articles of the Creed and other subjects, have preserved intact the sacramental forms of Holy Orders and the Consecration.

"The ancient Greek Church," writes Cohalan in his work on the Eucharist, "is now divided into sixteen independent churches (separated from the Catholic) and called by the common name of *Orthodox Eastern Churches*. All of them retain the doctrine of the real presence and of the physical conversion of the bread and wine into the Body and the Blood of Christ. Therefore all the ancient sects, such as the Arians (fourth century), the Nestorians and Mono-

[1] *Supra*, Chapter v. art. 2.

physites (fifth century), and all the autonomous orthodox churches agree with the Catholics that the Body and Blood of Christ are found really and essentially in the Eucharist, and that the bread and the wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ."[1]

Here Cohalan gives as example the Catechism of the Russian Orthodox Church, which on this point could pass for Catholic, using even our word *transubstantiation.*

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We shall now learn what the sacred liturgies teach: and we begin with that most ancient book the *Doctrine* (Greek, *Didachê*) *of the twelve Apostles.*

This work was regarded as of high authority in the first centuries, and was believed by some people to be sacred and inspired. In course of time it was forgotten, and by the twelfth century it was almost lost, a few pieces only being preserved. Philoteus Briennius, Greek Metropolitan, discovered the *Didachê* in the Jerusalem library of Constantinople in 1875, and in 1883 published it to the great satisfaction of the learned. The *Didachê* was published not later than the beginning of the second century, for Clement of Alexandria quotes it, and authorities hold that (whoever is the author) it is probably a work of the second half of the first century, while some of the Apostles were still living. It is, therefore, of great importance. It places us in

[1] *De Sanctissima Eucharistia*, Quest. iii. 4, p. 258; Dublin, Gill & Son, 1913.

contact with the religious life of a very ancient Christian Community in the East, probably that of Alexandria; it gives a Catechism for Catechumens and instructions regulating public prayer, the sacred rites, the ministry of preaching and the order of Christian assemblies. Few documents are so interesting for the study of early Christian practices.

Our interest is concerned with that part of the *Didaché* that treats of the Eucharist, Chapters IX, X and XIV. The following is a literal translation :—

IX. "Give thanks for the Eucharist and first for the chalice[1]: 'We give Thee thanks, O Father, for the holy vine of David, Thy servant, which Thou hast shown us through means of Jesus Christ[2]: to Thee be glory for ever' . . . For the bread that was broken: 'We thank Thee, O Father, for the life and knowledge which Thou hast given us, through the means of Jesus, Thy servant: To Thee be glory for ever . . . Let no one eat or drink of your Eucharist, unless he is baptised in the name of Jesus. For the Lord said: Do not give what is holy to dogs."

X. "After you shall have partaken, return thanks thus: 'We give Thee thanks, O holy Father . . . Remember, O Lord, Thy Church,

[1] St. Paul also (1 Cor. x. 16) commemorates the chalice first, which is to be blessed as "the Communion of the Blood of Christ." Probably because being taken last, thanks were first returned for it.

[2] St. Clement of Alexandria (*Quis div. salv.*, c. 29) calls the Blood of the vine of David, that is of his race, *Blood of Christ.* And Origen (*Hom. in Iud.*, vi. 2) states that the Eucharistic Blood comes from the *true vine* which descends from David, that is, from Jesus.

free it from every evil . . . Hosanna to the God of David. If anyone is holy, let him approach, if he is not let him do penance. *Maran-atha.* Amen.' "[1]

XIV. "After you shall have assembled on the Lord's day (*Sunday*), break bread and return thanks, after having confessed your sins, so that your sacrifice may be clean. Let no one having a quarrel with his brother approach with you, until they are reconciled, so that your sacrifice may not be defiled. For the Lord has said: 'In every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to My name a clean oblation, for My name is great among the Gentiles.' "

XV. "Appoint then Bishops and worthy deacons. Perform your prayers and alms and all your acts, as you are directed by the Gospel of Our Lord."

The text, therefore, of the *Didaché*, especially taken in connection with what is found in the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles of St. Paul and the first Fathers of the Church, is an illustration and instruction to the faithful, short, but very clear, regarding the Mass and Holy Communion in the first century of the Church. Therein the faith of the Church in the real presence of Our Lord in the great Sacrament of the Altar is plainly represented. Moreover, we see what

[1] In the ancient liturgy (as we have seen and shall see again) the deacon used summon the faithful to Communion with the words: *Holy things for the holy;* that is, holy things are for those only who are holy. A serious warning for those who were to approach the holy Altar!

Maran-atha, also found in St. Paul (1 Cor. xvi. 22), is an Aramaic word signifying: "Come, O Lord," or "Our Lord comes."

purity of soul, what a spirit of love and charity was required in him who approached the Holy Sacrament. This extract from the celebrated text of a liturgy of Apostolic times is very valuable.

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We shall now quote the Roman or Latin liturgy, which comes from the time of the Prince of the Apostles.

In ordination to the diaconate the Bishop admonishes sub-deacons in the following words: "Be you neat, clean, pure, chaste, as become ministers of Christ and dispensers of the mysteries of God . . . *And since co-ministers and co-operators in the Body and the Blood of the Lord, be you free from all carnal affection.*"

The Bishop, in ordination to the priesthood, prays as follows over the newly ordained: "Omnipotent God, author of all holiness, . . . pour the gift of Thy benediction on these Thy servants, in order that . . . for the good of Thy people they may, by the immaculate benediction, transform the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Thy Son."

Coming to the celebration of the Mass at the present day in the Latin Church, the declaration of the celebrant at the Consecration, the prayers before and after, at his own Communion and at that of the faithful, regarding the real presence of the Lord in the Eucharist are well known. Before the Consecration the priest prays that *God may accept and bless the oblation, in order that it may become the Body and Blood*

of Thy most beloved Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ. Employing the words of Jesus Christ and by His authority he says: *This is My Body—this is the chalice of My Blood.* And in the Communion: *Lord I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof, etc. Then: May the Body of Our Lord Jesus Christ preserve my soul to life eternal.* And for the faithful who are to communicate: *May the Body of Our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy soul to life eternal.*

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Before the actual Roman liturgy prevailed over those of its Latin sisters, there were other liturgies that varied in some particulars, in use in the Church. We shall give some of them:—

In the *Sacramentary of Gelasius*, the end of the fifth century, we read: "The host which is offered by very many through grace (*infusion*) of the Holy Spirit becomes the only Body of Christ. Each one receives Christ the Lord. He is whole (*totus*) in each portion; nor is He diminished in any portion, but is given entire to everyone." In the ancient Ambrosian Mass we read: "This is the Lamb of God, Who immolated, never dies; Who slain, always lives." And in the Ambrosian *Sacramentary*: "As we carry out the true heavenly sacrifice, we draw forth (*hauriamus*) the truth of the Body and of the Blood of the Lord."

The following prayer, corresponding to the *Epiclesis* of the Easterns and to the prayers which

the Latins must say, partly before the Consecration, and partly after the Consecration, is found in the Gothic liturgy: "May the Paraclete descend, and having sanctified the oblation (of the bread and wine) by the heavenly change, may we partake of it; and may the wheat changed into the Body and the chalice into the Blood avail us to salvation . . . so that by the divine power we may receive the bread *changed into flesh* and the draught *changed into blood*, from that chalice which flowed from Thy side from the cross."

Could the real presence of Our Lord in this Sacrament be expressed in clearer terms?

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We now come to the Oriental liturgies, beginning with the *Greek* of St. John Chrysostom, so-called because this great Doctor perfected it. In the *epiclesis*, or prayer that accompanies the Consecration, the deacon says in a low voice[1]: *Bless, O Lord, the holy bread.* And the celebrant continues: *And make of this bread the precious Body of Thy Christ.* To which the deacon replies: *Amen.*

The deacon continues: *Bless, Lord, the holy chalice.* And the celebrant: *And of what is in this chalice* (make) *the precious Blood of Thy Christ.* The deacon: *Amen.*

Again the deacon: *Bless, Lord, both species.* The celebrant: *Changing them by the power of*

[1] *The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom.* Professor Mercatanti's version. Rome, Ferrari, 1907.

Thy Holy Spirit. To which the deacon replies: *Amen, amen.* Could anything be expressed more clearly?

In the same liturgy, after the *memento* for the living and the dead, and other prayers, the deacon proclaims: *Holy things for the saints*[1]; and at the Communion the profession of the celebrant is to be noted in connection with our subject: "The Lamb of God is broken and is divided, He Who is divided and is not separated, Who is always eaten and is never consumed, but sanctifies those who partake of Him."

In the Armenian liturgy we find this other prayer to the Lord: "Thou hast given us Thy Only-begotten Son . . . high priest and sacrifice, because He is always distributed amongst us without being consumed."

In the Coptic liturgy the priest, when elevating the host, says: "The holy Body, and the precious, pure and real Blood of Jesus Christ, Son of our God, Amen. The Body and the Blood of Emmanuel our God. Amen. I believe, I believe, I believe and confess to the very end of my life that this is the living Body of Thy Only-begotten Son, the Lord God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, come from the Lady of us all, the Mother of God, divine and holy Mary."

Finally, in the Ethiopian liturgy, after the words of Consecration, the people reply: "Amen, amen, amen. We believe and are certain, we

[1] This was the most ancient invitation for the Communion of the faithful. See above, *The Didache*, pp. 112-114.

praise Thee, O Lord, our God, this is truly Thy Body, and so we believe."

This, then, is the faith of the Church in all times, in all the rites clear, evident and indisputable, in that rite which is most sacred and unchangeable, namely, in the conferring of Orders and in the celebration of the divine Sacrifice.[1]

[1] See Muratori, *Lit. Rom. vetus*, tom. i.; Assemani, *Codex lit. Eccl. univ.*, etc.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Miracles.

The word of Jesus Christ, the testimony of the Apostles, the constant and universal faith of the Church, attested for us by the Fathers, the Martyrs, the most ancient monuments, and by all the liturgies, should suffice to satisfy human reason and lead it to believe the great mystery of which we treat. But the Lord, if only to help human weakness, which is not always aware of this mass of proofs, and which, in its ignorance and frailty, allows itself to be overcome by incredulity, has often deigned to provide another argument which strikes the senses and the imagination, and persuades the intellect, namely, that of *miracles*.

It is not the purpose of this book, nor would it be possible, to relate all the miraculous incidents by which God has deigned to manifest His real presence in this Sacrament.

And we shall not refer to *miracles of grace* which are not perceived by the senses, although they are great and marvellous to human reason, when not obscured by passion, or by wicked prejudice.

From what source did the martyrs derive their amazing strength and constancy? Is it not from this Sacrament, *de quo martyrium sumpsit omne principium*, "from which martyrdom had its whole beginning,"[1] as the Church teaches?

[1] *Secrets of the Mass*: "Fer. V. post Dom. III. Quadrag."

Why, in the first centuries, were the faithful permitted to bring the Eucharist to their homes, if not in order that they should have near them the Giver of all strength, and be able to nourish themselves with Him in the supreme dangers to which they were so often exposed, and at times so unexpectedly? Why such anxiety on the part of the Church to bring the holy Eucharist to Confessors of the Faith in prison, and why did these Confessors evince so great a desire to have it for their support, but because they knew from innumerable proofs and arguments the power they would derive therefrom, strength so great as sometimes to render them insensible to the most awful torments, as St. Leo the Great narrates of the most glorious St. Laurence? Who has not read with emotion a description of the Mass celebrated by a priest in chains in the horror of the prison, that he might support himself and his companions before appearing before the tyrant to confess their faith? Whence comes the support, the strength, often so heroic, of the Saints and so many of the faithful?

In a recent number of the *Missions of Kenya* [1] (Central Africa) we read that some of the newly-converted, exposed to the scoffs and seductions of their fellow-countrymen, Mohammedans and Pagans, ardently desired to receive Holy Communion every morning, because they said: "We will then feel stronger and more secure."

With much reason then is the Eucharist called

[1] The periodical, *La Consolata*, of the Kenya Missions, March, 1922.

"the bread of the strong": *panis cor hominis confirmans*; and St. John Chrysostom counsels [1] us "to rise from that table like lions breathing fire, 'formidable' to the devil": *tamquam leones igitur ignem spirantes ab illa mensa surgamus, diabolo formidabiles;* "for when the demons see in us the Blood of the Lord they take to flight, and the angels hasten to our help."

We shall not treat of the moral miracles of the Sacrament, although they have co-operated so powerfully in the conversion of the world; we shall confine ourselves to some well-authenticated and well-known wonders that strike the senses.

I.—*Some Ancient Miracles.*

We shall relate first those against profaners of the Eucharist, which St. Cyprian [2] relates in his book *De lapsis*, n. 18. He speaks of a sinner who, after having received the Eucharist in the *domenicale* (the cloth in which the women used to receive the sacred species), does not communicate herself through fear, but brings the Sacrament to her home. Later she opens the little tabernacle in which it was kept, perhaps to communicate herself, when a flame that would have burned her had she not fled, bursts forth. He tells of another who, having approached the altar and received unworthily, fell to the ground, trembling all over as if about to die; and of still another who, having dared to stretch forth his hand for the Eucharist,

[1] *Hom.* 49 *in Ioann.*
[2] *Supra*, Chapter v., sec. "St. Cyprian."

although he was in sin, looks, and instead of the sacred species found a handful of ashes.

At Alexandria, in the time of St. Peter, Bishop, successor of St. Athanasius, a miracle of a different nature was wrought. A poor paralysed cripple approached the altar, covered with blushes, as he did not know how to stretch out his paralysed hands to receive the divine bread; the holy Bishop, inspired no doubt from on high, encourages him, saying: "stretch out your hand." He makes an effort, does so, and is cured immediately.[1]

We find another marvellous occurrence related by Cotelerius, when speaking of St. Arsenius in Vol. 1, page 421, in *Selections from the lives and Monuments of the Greek and Oriental Fathers.*

Towards the fifth century many anchorites lived in the desert of Scete, in Egypt, under the supreme direction of an Abbot; although they dwelt in separate huts, they were accustomed to assemble on Sunday to celebrate the feast in common. The Abbot Arsenius relates an incident that happened in his time. I translate the document with some explanations in parenthesis. "An old anchorite was going about saying that the bread that one receives (in Communion) is not the body of Christ in nature, but in figure. Two monks heard this. They went to the Abbot Arsenius and said to him: 'We heard a monk speaking against the faith, because he said that the bread which we take

[1] The relation is preserved in a panegyric in the Coptic language, discovered by Hivernat on a fresco (See Magani *The Sacred Liturgy*, vol. ii. art. 5, c. 2, sec. 2.)

is not the Body of Christ by nature, but its antitype' (the shadow or figure). The old man (who was present) replied: 'It is I who think this.' 'Father,' they said, 'don't believe this, but believe what the Catholic Church teaches: we believe this bread to be the Body of Christ: and the chalice to be the very Blood of Christ, in truth and not in antitype (figure). And, as at the beginning (of the world), taking dust from the earth, He formed man to His image; so likewise, in the case of the bread of which He has said it *is My Body*, we believe it to be the Body of Christ in truth.'" (The old man, however, did not yield easily to the reasoning of the two monks, for the relation of the Abbot Arsenius continues thus.) "Sunday came and they went to the church (the old man and the two monks who had admonished him, as well as all the other anchorets); and their eyes were opened; as soon as the 'species' of bread was placed on the holy table it appeared to three only as a little child, and as usual to the others . . . and when they came forward to receive the holy species (the Communion . . . *here we must remember that the consecrated bread used be placed in the hands, and that the faithful took it away to communicate themselves*), the old anchoret alone perceives that bleeding flesh is given to him. In terror he called out: 'I believe, Lord, that the bread is Thy Body and the chalice Thy Blood,' and immediately the flesh in his hands became bread, as in the mystery."

Another amazing prodigy occurred in Con-

stantinople in the time of the Emperor Justinian in 574. It was the custom here, of which the historian Nicephorus[1] speaks, to call children of tender age to consume the sacred particles that remained after the celebration of Mass. It happened one day that amongst the children was a Jewish boy, son of a glass-blower, who approached the altar unobserved, and partook of the Eucharistic bread. This he told to his father after his return home. The father, raging (he was a fanatical Jew), forgetful of every paternal feeling, and lost to the light of reason, seized the child and threw him into the blazing furnace used for melting the glass. The mother in despair, tearing her hair, rushed out in frenzy, filling the street with her heart-breaking shrieks. A crowd gathered round the Jew's house and went to the furnace. Oh, marvel! they behold the boy alive and undaunted in the midst of the flames. They extinguish the fire in haste and take him out, inquiring eagerly how he had been preserved. The child replies simply that "the woman who has a child in her arms and who is sitting down in the church, where I ate the bread of the Christians, covered me with her cloak and kept the flames away from me." A two-fold miracle—of the Eucharist and of Most Holy Mary!

The event became famous, and was heard of even in Gaul. St. Gregory of Tours relates it in his work *De gloria Martyrum*, book i. chap. 10, also Evagrius, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, book iv. chap. 35, as well as Nicephorus as above.

[1] *Hist. Eccl.*, lib. xvi. c. 25.

2.—*Blood flows from the Sacramental Species.*

Perhaps the most celebrated miracle under this head is that of Bolsena. In 1273 a Bohemian priest who was harassed by doubts of the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, came to Rome to pray at the tombs of the Apostles and the martyrs that he might be freed from his troubles. Lodging in a house in Bolsena, he went to celebrate Mass at the church of St. Christina, when suddenly, at the breaking of the sacred host, he beholds with amazement blood to gush forth, and as many as twenty-five drops to fall on the corporal; in each drop he seemed to see the holy countenance of the Lord. In trembling fear and almost beside himself, he is unable to finish the Mass, so he folds and hides the corporal. Knowing that Pope Urban IV happened to be in the neighbouring city of Orvieto, the priest runs off, throws himself at the Pope's feet and tells all that has occurred. By orders of the Holy Father the Bishop of Orvieto went to Bolsena to make sure of the miracle, and to bring the relic to the Supreme Pontiff. An immense crowd, attracted by the report of the miracle, accompanied the Bishop as he bore the miraculous corporal to the Pope. The Pope himself, together with the Cardinals, went to meet the Bishop, and deposited the wonderful relic in a sacred place. In the following year, 1274, the same Urban IV instituted the festival of *Corpus Domini*, influenced assuredly by this miracle.

and Nicholas IV, on 13th November, 1290, laid the first stone of the famous Duomo of Orvieto, in which to preserve the sacred corporal. There it was placed, and to-day it is venerated in a costly tabernacle, adorned with mosaic, on the altar in the left transept of the Cathedral. It is preserved in a silver reliquary, weighing 400 pounds, 63 centimetres high and 1·30 m. broad, and studded with gems and mosaics.

It is shown to the public only twice a year, at Easter and the feast of *Corpus Domini*, and it is said that the stains of the miraculous blood are still visible.

This marvel is historically unassailable; it has been attested by the people of Bolsena and Orvieto, solemnly verified by the supreme authority of the Church, confirmed by the erection of a remarkable, or rather of several remarkable monuments, and finally perpetuated by the preservation of the sacred corporal.

The miracle was an anticipated reply to the heresy of the Hussites, the well-known heretics of Bohemia, and was another clear proof that in the Host, under the appearance of bread, there is something very different from what appears therein.

We must not imagine that this was the only event of a similar kind; many others such are related by historians, and hallowed in monuments. Such a one occurred in Ferrara on Easter day, 28th March, 1171, in the church of St. Maria in Vado, which, on this account, was later transformed into a magnificent temple. On the occurrence of the seventh centenary in

1871 a memorial celebration of the event was held.[1]

At the beginning of the thirteenth century, when the impious Albigensian heresy was being propagated in Tuscany, Our Lord, as if to confound it, worked a similar prodigy in the church of St. Ambrose of the Benedictines. The proofs of the miracle were for some time preserved at the archiepiscopal palace, until the nuns, insisting on their restoration to them, they were brought back with great pomp to St. Ambrose's, and placed in a tabernacle, a masterpiece of sculpture, in a chapel on the right of the high altar. Every year, on the 30th December, a great concourse of the faithful meet here to celebrate the festival of "the most holy miracle."

In the church of St. Mark of Asti, in Piedmont, on 25th July, 1533, the miracle of the Blood was wrought to confound the Lutheran heresy then attempting to spread across the Alps. The celebrant, when breaking the Host, perceived that the cloths became damp, and soon that drops of blood fell: wherefore, being much frightened, he began to tremble. The faithful, thinking that he was ill, ran forward to his support, and they also witnessed the prodigy. Report of the miracle spread through all Italy, and Pope Paul III, having made certain of its truth, granted special indulgences to those who should visit that church and altar.[2]

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[1] Laurenti, *Miracles of the Most Holy Sacrament.*
[2] Ibid. op. cit.; Ughelli, *Italia Sacra.*

More wonderful still, Our Lord sometimes wished to terrify by the sight of blood gushing from the sacramental species, the wicked who dared to insult and profane them.

At Paris, in the Rue Billètes, in 1290, a Jew bought a sacred particle from a woman: filled with hate, he proceeded to pierce it with a penknife, and in terror beheld blood gush forth. The affair was disclosed through the innocent indiscretion of his little son, who went about saying that his father had killed the God of the Christians. The crime becoming known thus, the Host was found, and is now preserved in the church of St. John in Grève. The child and the mother were converted, but not the father. The house in which the sacrilege was committed was destroyed, and an oratory called the Chapel of the Miracles was erected over it.

In Herkenrode, a parish in Belgian Limburg, a like prodigy occurred in 1311. The miracle caused the Council of Vienne, held in France 1311-12, to extend the festival of *Corpus Domini* to the whole Church. Another miracle like to this occurred in 1337, when a Jew in Deggendorf, Bavaria, profaned the sacred particles. Even still many pilgrims resort to this place to pray in the church erected in memory of the event.[1]

Not to multiply similar examples; in 1572, when the Protestant heresy was desolating so great a part of Europe, a band of the heretics rushed into the Cathedral of Gorcum, in Belgium, and having sacked it, one of their number took the Host from the ostensorium, threw it

[1] *Annali dei Sacerdoti Adoratori*, December 1, 1922.

on the ground and trampled on it. Nails pierced it in three parts, when lo! round the edges of the holes little drops of blood formed like three small crowns. At this sight the heretics were terrified and fled, whilst the guilty man, frightened more than the others, but moved by grace, ran to inform the Dean of the Cathedral.

He went to the church, verified the miracle, gathered up the parts of the Host, and fleeing rapidly out of the city, accompanied by the repentant profaner, went to Mechlin and placed the sacred species in the Franciscan church. The desecrator, in expiation of his sin, was admitted into the convent and received the habit of the Franciscans. In order to save the Host from dangers threatened by the revolutionaries, it was brought first to Antwerp and afterwards to Vienna, where, on 13th November, 1592, the miracle was declared authentic by the Nuntio Apostolic, Cesare Speciano. In the reign of Philip II it was brought to Madrid, and is now kept on the altar called of the *Sagrada Forma* (Holy Host) in the *Escorial.*[1]

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Before concluding this article we may ask, what is to be thought of the Blood that flowed from the Sacred Hosts, whether in the Mass or in the sacrilegious outrages we have related.

It is clear that it is not the actual Blood of the human divine Person of the Word: for He is glorious and impassible in heaven. In the Mass we have the renewal of the divine sacrifice,

[1] *Bolletino Eucharistico*, Genoa, August 1919.

but bloodless; that is, without the shedding of blood, as defined by the Council of Trent in the XXII Session, chap. 2. Hence the blood that flowed in the afore-mentioned prodigies was not blood really flowing from the veins of the glorious Redeemer. What then is to be thought of this blood?

The fact is certainly true, well-known, and incontestable. It is equally certain and incontestable that, according to the natural law, bread which has been broken cannot shed blood. What is it then? We have only to conclude that this is a miraculous blood which God has caused to flow. How and why is this, and what is its nature?

It is not difficult to conclude why: it is in order to strengthen the Christian faith, by showing that under the sacramental species there exists and is hidden something quite different from ordinary bread.

How and what is its nature? That is a mystery of divine wisdom and omnipotence which we cannot scrutinise, but before which we must bow. The Eucharist in itself is a wonderful miracle, but invisible to the senses; the flow of blood from it is truly a great miracle; and this which is visible must confirm faith in that which is non-visible.

3.—*Apparitions of Jesus in the Eucharist.*

Not unfrequently Our Lord has rendered Himself visible in the Eucharist in a still more convincing manner, by appearing not only to some Saint or to groups of the faithful, but even to unbelievers, in order to convert them. A more singular and touching circumstance is that He deigned to appear often in the form of a very beautiful child. (The Eucharist is the Sacrament of love.) Jesus, then, in these appearances very justly wished to assume the form of a child, one of the most lovable forms on earth.

Rohrbacher, in book 53 of his *Universal History*, narrates the following: Vitichindo, king of the Saxons, after having fought many great battles with Charlemagne, made peace and showed an inclination to abandon his false German gods and to embrace Christianity. One final incident completed his conversion. It occurred in Holy Week of A.D. 786 or 787. The haughty Saxon king, having disguised himself, went unrecognised to the place in which Charlemagne was holding his court. He assisted at the sacred functions, and even at holy Mass on Easter day, when Holy Communion was administered at the sacred table in the Cathedral, and of which Charles himself partook. Discovered at last by some who knew him, he was brought before the French monarch, who, in wonder, asked the reason of his coming and of his disguise. "Curiosity," replied Vitichindo,

" the better to observe, and to see everything more freely."

" And what hast thou seen and observed ? " asked Charlemagne. And Vitichindo, having described what he had observed, as most noteworthy, in the sacred functions, continued: " What, however, excited my greatest wonder, Sire, was to see that all those who approached that table (on Easter Sunday) received on their lips from the hand of the sacred minister a beautiful child, who smiled on some, but showed himself displeased with others. I do not yet know what this means."

" Oh, happy thou ! " exclaimed Charles, filled with admiration. " To you it was given to see what neither I nor my priests were worthy of seeing."

The mystery was then explained to the brave Saxon king, and Vitichindo became a Christian. Thus was again verified what St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians (1 xiv. 22): that miracles are for a sign and proof of truth more for unbelievers than for believers; inasmuch as the way to belief is often lighted by miracle for unbelievers, while for believers, faith in the word of God ought to be, and is sufficient.

History tells of many other such miracles; it will suffice to narrate but a few of them. In the Church of St. Amatus, at Douai, in France, in the year 1254, Jesus was seen in the Host, as is related by Thomas of Cantimpré, and by several others as well as Thomas, who were assembled on the occasion.

A similar apparition was repeated about the

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same time in the south of France, where the Albigensian heresy was raging. The reply given on the occasion by the Count de Montfort, the brave leader of the Catholic army against the heretics, when he was asked to run to see the miracle, is well known: "I believe, and I have no need of seeing to believe this truth."

Villani, in his *Chronicles*, relates that a similar miracle was wrought in Paris in the time of Louis IX, and a like reply was made by the saintly monarch to those who invited him to witness it. In the *Acta Sanctorum* the Bollandists lean to the opinion that the incident is one and the same, and refers to the Count de Montfort rather than to St. Louis IX.

St. Catherine of Sienna many times; St. Laurence on one Christmas night[1]; St. Gaetanus likewise one Christmas; Blessed Alphonsus Rodriguez,[2] St. John Berchmans, St. Mary Margaret Alacoque,[3] Blessed Balthasar Alvarez, S.J., confessor of St. Teresa,[4] and others of the saints and the faithful, were granted the same grace of seeing in the Most Holy Eucharist the same Jesus, now in the form of a beautiful child, now of the Good Shepherd.

Melher also relates an extraordinary event in the year 1848. A Protestant of Milwaukee (U.S.A.) had married a Catholic. He was a good man, but obstinately wedded to his Protestant principles. One day, however, he entered a

[1] *Roman Breviary*, 5 sett. les. vi.
[2] Schouppe, *Catechism*; Turin, Tip. art. 1888, vol. 2, pp. 116 and 160.
[3] Life of those Saints.
[4] Melher, *Examples*.

Catholic church in which the Most Holy Host was exposed for adoration, and whilst observing it and all the surroundings, and revolving in his mind many thoughts, he observed the Host to grow gradually larger, then disappear, and in its place the image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd to appear. Surprised and deeply moved, he left the church weeping and exclaiming: "The God of the Catholics is truly a living God." He was converted and became a fervent Catholic.

Finally, that it may not be thought that God's hand is shortened by time, we shall relate a fact of very recent date, which appeared in the periodical *Il Servo di Maria*, organ of the missions of *Acre and Alto Purus*, 1st January, 1922: "I have learned that last year, when the Monsignore (Bishop Bernardi) was celebrating Mass in the Church of St. Sebastian, at Acre, a little girl saw in his hands a very beautiful infant, who made her know that in three days He would call her to Himself. The child told all this to her parents, and begged them not to weep, because, she said, she was going to enjoy great happiness! After three days the child died, with an angelic smile on her lips." The incredulous will smile at these incidents, and will attribute them to suggestion. We believe them because of the virtue of the saints, the naïveté of childhood, and the very incredulity of the infidel, followed by conversion.

4.—*Other Prodigies.*

Irrational animals and the material elements

themselves have been seen many times to venerate the Eucharist.

The miracle of St. Antony of Padua is well known. He was preaching on the truths of the faith to a large crowd in Rimini, when he was challenged by a Jew, who denied the truth of the Eucharist, saying: "You confound me by your words, because you are more learned than I am, but let us come to deeds; prove it to me by them." St. Antony accepted the challenge, and permitted the Jew to name the proof he required. A mule was kept without food for three days, and at the end of the time the Jew, accompanied by a great crowd, led it out to the place in which he was to meet the Saint. The latter was celebrating Mass, and when he reached the Communion he went forth with the Sacred Host, and turning to the mule said: "In the name of Jesus Christ, Whom I, though unworthy, hold in my hands, I command you to come forth and do reverence to your Creator, that you may confound these heretics." The Jew now threw a handful of hay and oats to the hungry animal, but at a sign from the Saint it left them untouched, although famishing with hunger, and approaching the Saint bent its knees before him, and bowed its head as a mark of veneration. The miracle was plain for all: the Jew, as well as others, was converted. A chapel was erected on the spot in memory of the event, and is preserved to the present day.

On 14th September, 1226, the festival of the Holy Cross was being solemnly celebrated

in Avignon, when the Rhone suddenly overflowed its banks and flooded the city to such an extent as to make people fear that the water would reach the altar on which the Most Holy Sacrament was exposed in the chapel of the Grey Penitents. When the first panic had subsided a few courageous men went to the church in a boat to save it. The water had certainly entered the church, but divided to the right and the left, leaving the passage to the altar, on which was still the Most Holy, surrounded by burning candles, quite dry. In an incredibly short time, knowledge of the miracle spread, and a number of boats were seen to move towards the church, among them that of King Louis VIII, who happened to be in Avignon. In memory of the prodigy, daily exposition of the Most Holy Sacrament which, after seven centuries, is still carried on, was established in this chapel, with the approbation of the Supreme Pontiffs.

About the middle of the thirteenth century the army of Frederic II, which counted a considerable number of Saracens and other unbelievers, sacked the valley of Spoleto. Twenty thousand of them went to Assisi and first attacked the convent of St. Damian, in which St. Clare dwelt, outside the city. They were already scaling the walls. Depredation, outrage and death seemed inevitable. Divinely inspired, the Saint, although ill, caused the ciborium containing the Most Holy Sacrament to be brought to her, and hurrying with it to the window cried out in the words of the Prophet: "O Lord, give not over to the beasts the souls

that trust in You." The barbarians, as if struck by an invisible hand, hurled themselves from the ladders and the walls, and fled.

In the year 1453 a fierce war was raging amongst the French, the Savoyards and the Piedmontese. At the sack of the little town of Exilles a robber entered the church, broke open the door of the tabernacle, and took out the ostensorium containing the Host. He hastened away with this and other objects, concealing them in a sack. He loaded the objects on a mule and hastened to Turin to effect the sacrilegious sale of them. But the hand of the Lord was present! Having reached the square of St. Sylvester—it was the 6th of June—the animal stopped suddenly, fell to the ground, and no force could make him move. The cords of the sack were unloosed, then the ostensorium with the Host comes forth, and instead of falling to the earth rises slowly into the air and is visible from all sides. A crowd at once gathers round and cries out "a miracle"; the numbers were so great that even the roofs were filled with people. The Archbishop, Monsignore Louis of Romagna, hastily comes up and awestruck is wrapt in quiet prayer. It is related that the ostensorium fell at once, and that the Host remained balanced in the air, flashing forth a most brilliant light. Meanwhile the Archbishop caused a chalice to be brought, and prayed the Lord to deign to descend into it; and the Host, its light growing less and less, descended into the chalice amidst the commotion, the cries and the tears of that immense multitude. It

was then brought to the Cathedral, and by order from Rome was consumed.[1] In memory of this miracle the privilege of the Office of the Most Holy Sacrament, on the anniversary of this miracle, was granted to the diocese of Turin; a commemoration stone enclosed by an iron railing was afterwards placed where the miracle occurred, and later the municipality of Turin erected there a church, one of the most beautiful in the city, and called it *Corpus Domini*.

Miraculous also was the preservation of the sacred particles stolen in 1730 and afterwards found. They are still incorrupt in the basilica of St. Francis of Sienna.[2]

We could relate very many more miracles of a similar nature, of which there is authoritative proof equally strong. Many are depicted in the Eucharistic Museum of Paray-le-Monial. Here we see the clergy and people of the city of Clermont going in procession to take up from the grass a Host, around which a swarm of bees had built a waxen tabernacle. There are seen thunderbolts falling on two sacrilegious wretches at Retingen who were preparing to pierce with daggers some Hosts that had been stolen from a church; again, St. Bernard is seen raising the Most Holy Sacrament over the head of a poor possessed woman and delivering her Then fishes appear carrying to the bank the sacred species which a Spanish priest lost, as he was crossing the river. Again, in a field near Posen, in Germany, un-

[1] Received in Holy Communion by a Priest at Mass.

[2] See historical study of Father Augustine Ruelli; Sienna, Tip di S. Bernardino, 1917.

clean animals were observed prostrate in adoration before some sacred particles that had been stolen by Jews and buried there in fear of surprise.

What is to be said of the miracles at Lourdes, which even in our own times happen in the processions of the Most Holy Sacrament, as if to show that devotion to most holy Mary must not be separated from that of the Most Holy Sacrament.

Those who are anxious to learn the long list should read Boissarie's book, *Œuvre de Lourdes*. Besides the miracles that are wrought at the Grotto and in the waters of the holy well, very many occur in the procession of the Most Holy Sacrament. For years it has been customary, especially on the occasion of the great pilgrimages, to hold in the afternoon a solemn procession of the Most Holy Sacrament. On these occasions the sick, who have come to Lourdes in search of health, are brought in special conveyances to the great square of the Basilica, through which the procession passes, and here they wait in the hope of a cure from Him who can do all things, asking that through the intercession of His divine Mother, in this place so dear to her, He may be favourable to them. "Lord, he whom Thou lovest is sick," the pilgrims pray; "If Thou wilt Thou canst heal me, say but a word and I shall be healed," cry out the sick as well as the by-standers. It is truly a moving scene.

On 16th September, 1903, the Bishop, Monsignor Dubillard, was carrying the ostensorium.

Amongst the last stretchers of the sick was one on which lay the daughter of General Clément. For seventeen years she had suffered most severe pains, and her leg, reduced to a state of inflexibility, had lesions even to the bone. Her doctor and friends said it was folly to expect a cure. Yet she would go to Lourdes. The journey was a real martyrdom. She fainted three times while being conveyed from the station to the Sanctuary. Still she had faith. On the morning of the 16th she received Holy Communion at the Grotto, and in the afternoon wished to be present for the procession. Jesus passed by; she heard a sound, but could not move, and fell back on her couch as if bitterly disillusioned. The Bishop, who had passed by slowly, perceived her. He turned back, and blessing her anew, placed the ostensorium on her head. This was the moment of grace. The general's daughter felt that she was cured, she uttered a cry and, although for many years she had not touched the ground, she leaped down and, dressed as she was, proceeded to follow the procession. The miracle was evident, the enthusiasm of the crowd was beyond bounds.

How often have not similar miracles been repeated! Suggestion, not knowing how to harmonise the facts with their blind mentality, say the incredulous. Miracles, whereby God intervenes to prove that He Who can do all things is present in the adorable Eucharist, say we.

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Finally, what shall we say of the Angels? St. John Chrysostom gives his testimony, which is supported by St. Gregory the Great, that they surround the altar on which the Divine Sacrifice is celebrated. The Abbot Nilus and many others, such as the servant of God, Peter da Basso, S.J., who died in Cochin China in 1645, saw them. An Angel administered the Holy Communion to St. Raymond Nonnatus, St. Catherine of Sienna, St. Stanislaus Kostka, Blessed Joanna Maria Bonomo, the pious Jerome da Sylva, a Spanish Jesuit, and to many others.

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All this is truly marvellous. Yet what has been narrated is but a bare index, a small specimen of the wonders wrought by Jesus in the Eucharist, in the Mass and in Holy Communion. The Lord has been pleased to adopt this means to help human weakness and to confound heretics.

CHAPTER IX.

The Mystery of the Eucharist.

We believe, and the Church teaches, on the Word of Jesus Christ, on the faith of the Apostles, of saints and martyrs, and, as has been confirmed by innumerable miracles, that the Son of God Who, glorious and blessed, is seated on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty, deigns, at the word of one of His priests, to descend constantly on earth, to veil Himself under the simple species of a little bread and a little wine, that He may be present amongst men; it teaches that He multiplies His presence for this purpose in all parts of the earth; and that, moreover, He permits all men to be united with Him in the most intimate manner in which He can give Himself to them, that is, as food.

This in itself and by itself is a great miracle, and a compendium of many most extraordinary miracles.

How can we believe them? On the Word of Jesus Christ, Who is the Son of God; truly man, but also God, and therefore the infallible truth that is not deceived; supreme holiness and justice that cannot deceive; infinite power that can do all things.

Is He not the Creator of the world? Now, if God has known how, and has been able, to bring forth from nothing what has no existence, can He not perform what is a much less miracle, namely, change the substance of the bread and

wine in the Eucharist, whilst preserving intact the external species or appearances, as a veil for His glory and greatness? The first wonder of this incomparable sacrament is this change, or *transubstantiation*, as it is called in the classic and most appropriate word of the Church.

Did He not change water into wine by a mere act of His will at the marriage feast of Cana? What wonder then that by a single act of His omnipotent Will He should now change wine into His Blood and bread into His Body.[1]

It will be said: *This is a miracle!* Certainly it is a miracle, and a great miracle. *We cannot explain it to ourselves.* True; but it is not a just reason for denying a fact, otherwise certain, that we do not know *how* it happened, or how it can happen.

Every moment and everywhere, we are surrounded by things inexplicable and extraordinary; we do not know how they occur, and yet we accept them without hesitation, because they are assured to us by proofs that cannot be disregarded.

Cast your gaze over one of our fields. The apple tree grows near the pear tree, the cherry tree near the walnut, the vine twines around the elm tree, and plants of very different kinds spring from the same soil. All imbibe the same moisture, scant moisture often, and supplied by opposing elements; and yet from this moisture, mysteriously dispensed, fruits spring of the most varied kinds; here a bunch of grapes, there a savoury apple, then a mere nut. How is this wonderful transformation brought about?

[1] See Chapter v. art. 13, "St. Ambrose," etc.

After so many thousands of years, after so much study of man and his proud pretensions, the secret of this transformation, the key of this enigma remains hidden. Still, convinced by the fact and by our senses we are satisfied, and admit it without hesitation.

Enter a garden. You behold the rose by the side of the lily; the lowly violet near the wall-flower; flowers of varied colours and endless species beautifying the prospect and perfuming the air. Whence come this variety of form, these sweet odours, these dazzling colours? All draw their life from the same soil, the hand of man does not create them, but merely helps their development. Without study, without intelligence, each little plant imbibes and assimilates and, by means of some secret and incomprehensible alchemy, changes the moisture it has imbibed into a garment more radiant than any monarch could aspire to rival. Who can explain these marvels? Yet, we admit them all; and without seeking to discover how they occur, because of the testimony of our senses, we have no doubt as to their existence.

If we pass from the vegetable to the animal kingdom what a countless multitude of living beings do we not find peopling the earth, sea and sky. Consider the many other marvels, the properties, the mysterious instincts with which they are endowed and which we recognise without any hesitation, although we do not know their origin or mode of procedure. How else can they be accounted for but by the omnipotent action of God?

Who has not been amazed in viewing under the magnifying power of the microscope the myriads of beings that are born in a drop of putrid water? Of endless forms, endowed with perfect organs for their state, even those of reproduction for their brief life of a few moments, they swim about as if in an ocean.

If we observe ourselves, how many mysteries are there in the small world of man! Examine an anatomical figure. Who is not amazed at the most complicated organism of our body? Flesh, bones, muscles, blood, veins, arteries, tendons, vessels of varied shapes and functions are all enclosed and marvellously intertwined within the most sensitive case of the skin. Yet all these vessels and organs discharge their functions with perfect exactness, without disturbing one another, in complete harmony (in the case of the healthy man) without our thinking of them and even while we sleep. How is this? In virtue of what? It is answered—by vital force. But what is vital force? Who has ever explained? And yet no one has any doubt about it.

Who has ever explained the connection of soul and body?—that is of a spirit, intelligent (or with intellect and will) and volitive, with the weak and material organism of our members. Our mind has hardly conceived the thought and willed, when hands, feet, eyes, tongue, obey with the speed of the lightning flash, and every member is in motion under the command of the will—that is, of the soul.

What shall be said of the marvels of sight

and hearing? In our eyes are depicted, as in miniature, the world surrounding us, and hereby we are placed in direct contact with the universe, and are enabled to see and admire it. It is a miracle, and cannot be explained. We admit it without discussion, never giving a thought as to how it is done: him who would not admit it we would hold to be mad.

How explain the generation of the human species? What secrets, what mysteries! How many desires of parents are frustrated, although they comply with the necessary condition for the creation of man! "I know not how you were formed in my womb," said the celebrated mother of the Machabees, when encouraging her sons not to fear the tyrant and death. This every mother must know and repeat.

Let us consider nutrition, that common and daily function of man. Without study on our part, without act of the will, the various foods which we eat are unconsciously changed into blood, nerves, bones, and become our very selves. How is this? Who has probed the process of transformation, who directs it; what is the vital force to which it is attributed? The fact is certain. How it is effected is not discussed.

Raise your eyes to the heavens, in immeasurable space, revolve the sun, the moon, the planets and the stars. These, according to the astronomers and the finding of science, are immensely greater in volume than our earth. Who supports them in space? The force of attraction and repulsion and their own giddy motion, we are told. Be it so. But is this suffi

cient to explain so great a prodigy ? Anyhow, who has given the power of attraction and repulsion ; who, in the first instance, set in motion these material, inert and lifeless bodies ? Who regulates the motions, the velocity, of such myriads of stars in the infinity of space ? Mystery ! the comprehension of which can but bring us to God. Who doubts, who denies these wonders ? We behold them with our eyes, astronomy assures us of them, and this suffices to win our belief.

Electricity ! This mysterious thing, discovered, we may say, even in our own times ; this power of which we constantly avail, which we know how to produce, which gives us light, power, heat, and which transmits with lightning's speed our news, and even our voices to the ends of the earth ; is not this a great natural mystery ? Is it a force distinct from the bodies in which it is developed, or is it identical with them ? Is it the very element that produces light and heat, as Père Secchi thought, or is it a totally different element ? We know not ; nor are science or scientists able to tell us. And yet who has any doubt about it ? Experience and fact assure us of the existence of this force, or mysterious element, whatever it may be, and we are satisfied. We admit it without discussion, and avail ourselves of its services.

Hence it follows that we are not to deny what is mysterious, because we do not know how it happens ; rather should we admit it, and without any difficulty, in all contingencies when we are assured of it by weighty reasons.

In acknowledging the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, and the miraculous transubstantiation of the bread and wine into His Body and Blood, we are convinced by a conclusive argument.

Oh, how great and how certain it is! It is no less than the infallible word of God and the authority of the Church, explicit, solemn, unchanging, from the days of the Apostles to our own day; confirmed, moreover, by most remarkable miracles.

Moreover, another argument may be found for *transubstantiation*; changing one substance into another is much easier than to bring forth something from nothing: hence we agree that God can do such a marvel and in fact does.

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But how can we admit the multiplication of His real presence in thousands of places, quite distinct and distant from one another? Is it not a contradiction?

We can appeal in this case to the omnipotence of God, and content ourselves with that. However, proofs are not wanting to lead our minds easily to believe it. In the first place let us consider *speech*. Pronounced in presence of a multitude; by means of the vibrations of the air, it is communicated to thousands of persons, unaltered and identical. Now, if speech, fleeting and casual, the word of man, makes itself heard and living to so many, cannot the *eternal word* do what is much more stable and substantial?

The same may be said of the image repeated

in a thousand eyes, in a thousand mirrors, which remains ever the same and identical and present for all.

But still more in favour of our argument is the existence of our soul. This one and indivisible, and residing principally in the brain and in the heart, affects the whole body and is present in its every part. Now, the Body of Jesus having been made glorious after His resurrection, acquired all the agility, the subtilty and the endowments of spirits. Did it not, in fact, penetrate to the Cenacle when the doors were shut, so that the Apostles thought that they were in presence of a spirit ? [1] If, then, the glorified body of Christ possesses the qualities of the spirits, is it not able, like the soul relatively to the body, to reside principally in heaven, and make itself sacramentally present in many places on earth ?

We may also refer to bilocation, granted and proved historically in the case of many saints. On the same day and at the same hour St. Antony

[1] What St. Gregory the Great writes (*Hom. 26 in Evang.*) may be recorded here : " The first question that occurs to the mind in this narration is how can it be true that the body of the Lord could enter the room in which the disciples were assembled while the doors were closed. We must reflect that the works of God, if they are understood by human reason, are no longer marvellous ; nor is there any merit for faith when human reason has experience. . . . But since the sight of the onlookers did not suffice to win their faith (*the Lord*) showed them immediately His hands and His side, and allowed them to touch that flesh which He had introduced through the closed doors." And here St. Ambrose notes (*Lib. 10 Com. in Luc. c. 24*), " what is touched is the body, what is felt is the body." And St. Gregory continues (loc. cit.): " In which the Lord showed two wonderful things contrary to human reason, for He showed that His body was incorruptible after His Resurrection, and tangible, to show us that His body was of the same nature, but of a different glory."

was seen in Padua and in Lisbon; St. Francis Xavier in different places in India; St. Alphonsus Liguori was present at the same time in his episcopal abode in his own diocese, and in Rome assisting the dying Pope. If now, by divine arrangement, different saints were present simultaneously in places far distant from one another, cannot God effect the same in the case of the Body of His divine Son?

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But why trouble further? In the presence of God's omnipotence and from His own assuring words, we have but to bow humbly and believe: to believe that in the Eucharist Jesus is whole and entire, and that He multiplies Himself in thousands of places on earth that He may be present to all His children to the end of the world.

CHAPTER X.

Conclusion.

We have now reached the stage when it is proper to ask, what is the correspondence of man with this great gift of God ? I do not speak of those who are outside the Church, nor of those, still more unfortunate, who have lost the faith ; I speak of professing Catholics, people who wish to be regarded as such.

As in the past and as will ever be, there are many of them who believe in and recognise and venerate the great Sacrament of the Eucharist, both in its permanent presence on our altars and in its *fieri*, that is the Mass, the sacred rite called by the ancients *fractio panis*. God and His Angels are aware of this great number better than we are ; through them the Christian society becomes the *Communion of Saints*. As much as human frailty permits, they conform their works and their lives to their own faith. For them there is nothing more precious, more sublime, more holy, than to assist at holy Mass, to approach the divine table, to spend some time at the feet of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

But amidst so much good, how many sad voids there are. Look around. Behold a crowd claiming to be called Catholics, and yet they do not assist at Mass, nor receive Holy Communion, even when it is of obligation. God receives infinite glory from the Eucharist, incomparable benefits are imparted by it to the

living and the dead, to the priest who celebrates and to him who assists at the divine Sacrifice, as to him who receives Holy Communion. But what matters this to the crowd of ignorant and indifferent Catholics? For a miserable human interest they strive and sweat; but for real heavenly good, for the divine Manna in the Eucharist they move not a step. O fallacy of human judgment. O folly of unhappy Christians!

Jesus, from Whom, and by Whom everything is, He Who is the glory of the Father, the happiness of the elect; Our Redeemer and Mediator is in the tabernacle for love of us, for our good, to help us; but long hours pass without any one coming to do Him homage, to say a word of love to Him. The crowd of men buzzes without, passes by the churches with indifference, and gives Him not a thought, spending in frivolity and idleness, if not in sin, their precious time, which is the gift of God. What negligence! What dead faith!

But let us enter the churches. There are many certainly in which the immortal king of ages is honoured. But even here how much is wanting. There are churches in which the altar of the Most Holy is squalid; cobwebs are in possession, and left undisturbed for weeks and weeks; candles, flowers, ornaments of piety, altar coverings, sacred vessels and other adornments that should not be offered to the humblest of guests are provided for Our Lord! "Is this your care for My dwelling (were He to speak)? Is this your respect for My person?"

What a responsibility rests on the clergy, wherever and whenever this happens! Let not the blame for such carelessness be thrown on the neglectful sacristan. He is not chiefly responsible. Excuse it not for want of means. This could be accepted for the absence of many things, but not for the want of cleanliness, order and propriety.

We should rather regard the scandal that such neglect causes to the faithful. How can the people imagine that the King of kings, Christ Jesus, living and real, abides in the sacred tabernacle when they see it so neglected and almost squalid?

The Scripture tells us that the sons of the Jewish High Priest Heli committed a great sin because by their action they turned the people from offering sacrifices to the Lord; and on that account both father and sons were severely punished. Is it not a turning away of the faithful from Divine worship, a continuous and practical sermon against the real presence of Our Lord in the Eucharist, when the altar and the church in which He resides are neglected?

Let rectors of churches think also of another serious fault in regard to the Most Holy Sacrament. In some churches His altar is left lonely, with but a single light before it, whilst before the picture of a saint there is often a display of lights, lamps and candles, with many people on their knees. Respect for those who are God's friends is just indeed, and still more just is devotion to His divine Mother; and this God desires. But the order prescribed by faith and reason

must be observed, and what is primary must not be made secondary. Rectors, therefore, act wrongly, when to humour the ill-ordered tastes of people, or for reasons less defensible, they allow devotion to be turned aside from the true path. They are not educating the people according to the faith, but rather perverting their religious sense. The Fathers of the Council of Sardica in such circumstances wrote: *Populus est docendus non est sequendus.*

***

Let us turn away our eyes from this disagreeable picture and contemplate a movement that is rising majestically around us, the holy and magnificent movement that we see on all sides in regard to the Most Holy Eucharist. Daily Communion has become more general; children of tender years hasten in fervour to Him Who said: "Suffer little children to come unto Me"; honours to the Most Holy Sacrament are multiplying all over the world; Eucharistic Congresses, local, national and general, succeed one another continuously, and emulate the great celebrations of the *Corpus Domini*. Who does not behold God's hand in all this?

May He Who can do all things grant that this movement which is developing so marvellously may not slacken or be marred, but rather ever continue! May the Church and the altar of the Most Holy Sacrament be *the large Cenacle and well furnished*[1] such as Jesus

[1] Mark xiv. 15; Luke xxii. 12.

wished for the institution of this Divine Sacrament: may the souls of all those who approach Him be clean and full of that humility and love which He taught us in the washing of the feet.

And, O Lord, may that happy day come quickly on which will be renewed the fervour of Apostolic times, when the faithful used to participate every day in the *communication of the breaking of bread*; that happy day when all believers will belong to one fold, and on which Christ may be *all things to all men—omnia in omnibus.*

And you, beloved priests of Sabina, for whom this book was first written, strive to accomplish that this wish may be attained as soon as possible amongst our people, who are so religious and so eager in well-doing.

Adoro te devote, latens Deitas,
Quae sub his figuris vere latitas;
Tibi se cor meum totum subiicit,
Quia te contemplans totum deficit . . .
Iesu quem velatum nunc aspicio,
Oro, fiat illud quod tam sitio,
Ut te revelata cernens facie,
Visu sim beatus tuae gloriae. Amen.[1]

[1] "O Godhead hid, devoutly I adore Thee,
Who truly art within the forms before me;
To Thee my heart I bow with bended knee,
As failing quite in contemplating Thee . . .
Jesu, Whom for the present veil'd I see,
What I so thirst for, oh, vouchsafe to me,
That I may see Thy countenance unfolding,
And may be blest Thy glory in beholding."

APPENDIX.

The Supreme Proof of Divine Love in the Eucharist.

HOMILY

Delivered by Cardinal G. De Lai, in Saint Laurence's Cathedral, 9th September, 1923, at the closing of the National Eucharistic Congress in Genoa.

The Incarnation of the Son of God was an event of such extraordinary condescension that no explanation is possible, except the immense love of God for man.

How He Who is the glory of His heavenly Father, He in Whom are contained all the treasures of Divine knowledge and wisdom, to Whom the Divine Father said: "Let all the Angels of God adore Thee . . . the heavens are the work of Thy hands; they shall perish but Thou shalt continue, Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever" [1]; in a word, He who is the second Person of the August Trinity, and God, like His Father, could have deigned to descend from heaven, assume a human body and soul, dwell amongst men and become their Master, guide and example, is a mystery of infinite love. But He did more, for, as St. Paul remarks, He humbled Himself unto death, even

[1] Heb. i. and elsewhere.

to the death of the Cross, the most shameful kind of death in those times, and the most torturing it is possible to imagine.

In this, as St. Paul continues—the Son of God, in His humanity, *exinanivit semetipsum*,[1] emptied Himself and almost annihilated His own immortal glory.

How can we account for this great sacrifice, this great humiliation?

Analyse it as you will, extend your researches in every direction, and you will find no adequate explanation, save that of the unbounded love of God for man.

Reason tells us this, faith teaches it to us, Our Divine Redeemer Himself has declared it. *Sic Deus dilexit mundum ut Filium suum unigenitum daret*—"God so loved the world as to give His Only-begotten Son."

What more could be done whereby God could prove His love for men, for *Maiorem caritatem nemo habet quam ut animam suam quis ponat pro amicis suis*—"Greater love than this no man hath than that a man lay down his life for his friends."

But Our Divine Redeemer wished, and knew how to do more: "having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end," states St. John, when writing, without doubt, of the Eucharist: *Quum dilexisset suos qui erant in mundo, in finem dilexit eos.* Whilst His raging enemies and the powers of darkness were plotting and striving to drive Him from the world, He, by the institution of the Eucharist

[1] Phil. ii. 7.

at the Last Supper, found a means of perpetuating His sacrifice for men, and of continuing His presence among them to the end of the world. It is by this Divine institution, as the Council of Trent declares, that the Son of God renews every day on earth, in a mystical and unbloody manner, but really and truly, the sacrifice of Golgotha, inasmuch as the Victim, Christ Jesus, Who is offered every day on our altars, is the same as He Who was offered one day on Calvary. This is the "clean oblation," beheld so many centuries before by the Prophet Malachy, "which was to be offered up everywhere on earth, and to be as the substitute for the old and insufficient sacrifices."

By the Divine institution Our Lord continued His real presence amongst us, not merely in one place, but wherever there is a priest and a Tabernacle.

In fine, by the institution of this Divine Sacrament, Our Lord effected the closest possible union of us with Himself, a union which He has depicted in the ineffable union of the Divine Persons.

O memorial of Divine marvels! O miracle of Divine knowledge and omnipotence! O proof of ineffable love! Very justly does St. Augustine exclaim: "God in His infinite wisdom knew not how to do more, being infinitely rich He had not more to give, in His omnipotence He could not do more." St. Thomas said the Eucharist was "Christ's greatest miracle."

Bewildered in the presence of such greatness, let us prostrate and adore it. Let the remem-

brance of the Infant Jesus, crying on the straw in the poor grotto in Bethlehem, move us to pity, and the Crucified bleeding for us on the Cross of Calvary stir the deepest depths of our souls.

But Jesus in the Eucharist ? It is impossible to love and venerate Him enough.

Very justly, then, O good citizens of Genoa, have you organised these most solemn celebrations, as proof of your faith, a demonstration of your veneration, a pledge of your love for Jesus in this Divine Sacrament.

Unable ordinarily, owing to your many occupations, to manifest such a display of homage and affection to the Son of God, you have devoted these days for the purpose and have summoned associates from every part of Italy to join with you. These are, indeed, days of faith and festivity, but they are also days of benediction ; for Our Lord, Whose glory is immortal and infinite in heaven, is pleased and accepts the homage of His creatures on earth, and rewards it by those blessings, which He alone, the Almighty, can bestow upon His creatures.

May God shower His blessings on you.

THE 15 NISAN.

(Note to Chapter III, page 27.)

Some people maintain that the Eucharist was established, not on the 15th, but on the 14th Nisan. We shall see that this contention cannot be sustained.

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The Jews had the lunar month, and a new month began with each new moon. The first month of the year was that in which the full moon (15th day) appeared after the vernal equinox. This month was called *Nisan.*

This month, and especially the 15th day, was sacred and solemn for the Jews, because it commemorated their departure from Egypt and their delivery from the slavery of the Egyptians; they were wont to celebrate it by partaking of bitter lettuce and unleavened bread. The day was called *Phase* or Passage, for it signified the passage of the people of God from Egypt to the Promised Land; to us it recalls our redemption by Christ, the passage from the slavery of the devil to the liberty of the sons of God.

From the time of Moses there were two ways of computing time amongst the Jews: one *natural* the other *ritual.* With us the latter is no longer in use, but the Church has preserved a remembrance of it on the first Vespers of festivals.

Amongst the Jews the reckoning of the *ritual* day was prescriptive and solemn. Moses, in the name of God, had commanded: *A vespera ad vesperam celebrabitis Sabbata vestra*—"from evening until evening you shall celebrate your sabbaths." [1] This command was not a mere ceremony, for on the sabbath the Jews were forbidden all servile work, even the preparation and cooking of their food.[2] Hence on the day before the sabbath they should prepare the food for the following day, and so the eve was called *preparation* day (Greek, *parasceve*).

For the Jews, sunset was an important moment, for from that moment on Friday they should cease all work, even that of cooking, whilst after sunset on the sabbath day they might engage in any work.

However, together with this ritual day, they had also the natural day. And whilst they spoke of one or the other indifferently, everybody knew which was meant. We have a classical example, which may be called fundamental, from Moses himself.

Let the following texts be compared: "Primo mense [*Nisan*] quarta decima die mensis, ad vesperam [hence when, according to ritual usage, the fifteenth day was already beginning], comedetis Azyma usque ad diem vigesimam primam eiusdem mensis *ad vesperam*. Septem diebus fermentum non invenietur in domibus vestris . . . Omne fermentatum non comedetis: in cunctis habitaculis vestris edetis Azyma." [3]

And elsewhere: "Mense autem primo, quar-

[1] Levit. xxiii. 32. [2] Exod. xxxv. 2, 3. [3] Exod. xii. 18 ff.

tadecima die mensis, Phase Domini est, et *quintadecima die solemnitas.* Septem diebus vescentur azymis: quarum dies prima venerabilis et Sancta erit; omne opus servile non facietis in ea . . . dies quoque septimus celeberrimus et sanctus erit vobis; omne opus servile non facietis in eo." [1]

The prohibition as to servile work given here, must be understood with the exception allowed in Exodus (xii. 16): *Nihil operis facietis in eis, exceptis his, quae ad vescendum pertinent.* On the day of the Pasch, therefore, and on the eighth, although they were festive and most solemn, it was allowed to prepare food.

From these texts it is seen clearly that from the time of Moses and according to his law, the Pasch was the 15 Nisan: *Quintadecima die solemnitas.* The Paschal festival, therefore, on which they began to eat unleavened bread and to kill the Paschal lamb, began on the preceding evening, the evening of the 14th: *Primo mense, quartadecima die mensis ad vesperam comedetis azyma.*

We can, then, say certainly that the institution of the Eucharist took place on the evening of the day 14 Nisan, having regard to the natural day; but it also may be said, and perhaps more correctly, having regard to the sacred ritual day, that it began at sunset on the 14th. Such explanation ends all controversy.

But it is most important to have a clear idea as to this date. The killing of the Paschal lamb and the Jewish Pasch were the prediction and

[1] Numbers xxviii. 16 ff.

the figure of the slaying of the Divine Lamb and the Christian Pasch: the departure from Egypt and the escape of the Jews from the slavery of the Egyptians were the symbol and prophecy of the liberation of the human race from the slavery of the devil. It is consoling to see how the figured and the figure fell on the same day; and how the prophecy affirmed the very day on which its symbol announced it. Here is the proof of it.

St. Matthew wrote: "On the first day of the Azymes the disciples came to Jesus, saying: Where wilt Thou that we prepare for Thee to eat the Pasch? . . . But when it was evening He sat down with His twelve disciples, etc."

And St. Mark: "Now, on the first day of the unleavened bread, when they sacrificed the Pasch, the disciples say to Him: Whither wilt Thou that we go and prepare for Thee to eat the Pasch? . . . And when evening was come He cometh with the twelve."

And St. Luke: "And the day of the unleavened bread came, on which it was necessary that the Pasch should be killed. And He sent Peter and John, saying: Go and prepare for us the Pasch, that we may eat. And when the hour was come He sat down, and the twelve Apostles with Him."

Here the three Evangelists evidently agree that the celebrated supper preceding the Divine Passion, happened on the evening 14 Nisan; that is, at the beginning of the fifteenth ritual day. Such was the law.

St. John also fixed this memorable date;

when writing of Pilate's statement to the Jews: *Ecce rex vester!* "It was the Parasceve of the Pasch"—*erat Parasceve Paschae.* Which means that it was Friday.

There is, then, no doubt that St. John agrees with the other Evangelists in letting us know that the holy and venerated evening on which Our Divine Redeemer instituted the Eucharist was that "on which it was necessary that the Pasch should be killed," and "the first day of the Azymes," in a word, the predicted day, our Holy Thursday.[1]

[1] See *The Passion of Our Lord*, 2nd edition, p. 375, app. 2, Card. De Lai.

THE NATIONAL EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS AT GENOA

(Extract from *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, July 1924, Rev. D. F. McCrea.)

The Congress had originally been arranged for the month of May, Mary's month, but owing to the illness of the Archbishop, it was deferred to September. Accordingly, the opening took place on Wednesday, 5th September, in the cathedral church of St. Laurence. The church was suitably decorated for the occasion, and only those who have seen Italian churches decorated for special feasts can well understand what this means. In the inauguration, the Pontifical Brief appointing the Papal Legate, Cardinal De Lai, to the Congress, was read. The Holy Father, in the Brief, referred specially to the great piety of the Cardinal, and his learned work on the Blessed Eucharist. As a distinctive mark of respect the Cardinals, Bishops and laity heard the message standing.

The Congress was conceived on a gigantic scale, and was in many respects unique. The Italians are past masters in the art of church decoration. On feasts, the interior is clothed in purple and gold and, interiorly and exteriorly, it is one blaze of lights. In street decoration they easily excel, and their religious processions, all through the ages, have been marvels of Catholic display. Genoa seemed to have requisitioned

all the experiences of the past, improving on them and introducing novelty almost in every detail. The Communion of the Sick in each parish, and the magnificent public processions associated therewith; the General Communion of the women and girls, of the young men and children, in the open piazza; the sessions of the different sections, and the subjects treated; the Polifonica Romana, with its elaborate programme of choice music: everything in perfect taste, yet unique in many particulars in the history of Eucharistic Congresses—all must have cost the promoters endless anxiety and thought.

Laymen and women took part in the general Conferences, and the friendliest interchanges prevailed between the lay and clerical element. Mussolini's national militia were everywhere, and endeavoured to render every assistance. The theme of religion was on every tongue, and the churches, the sessions, the prelates, the decorations and processions only had interest for the masses. As the Prelates and Cardinals entered the churches they were besieged, and there was always a rush to see the Cardinal Legate. As soon as the young Italians recognised their Bishops all order was at an end, and soon Monsignor was encircled with a kneeling group of young men and women, to whom he addressed a kindly word, gave his blessing, and with a smile, characteristically Italian, filed on. The country contingents, just arrived in charge of their priest, to whom they continually appealed, was an interesting sight. Their banner showed the district whence they came,

and clearly enough the surroundings were quite new to them. On the morning of Sunday all directed their course to the Cathedral of St. Laurence, whence the procession was to take place. The procession was scheduled for 2.30, but by noon the Cathedral piazza was one swaying mass. A discharge of cannon at 1.50 announced the procession's formation. In a moment the different groups got into line. The Civic Guard, with cyclist corps, move in front. Then the Catholic Boy Scouts, marching in real military fashion. Immediately following come the convent schools and the various young women's associations, habited in purest white. Now the different congregations of women, and notably the national association of the bereaved mothers and widows of the war, move forward with their banners and standards, one hundred and seventy-three in all. In the third group come the Catholic young men, numbering 20,000, with their 1,000 banners and bands, chanting their favourite hymn, *Noi vogliam Dio*. The processionists were marshalled in groups, and every district of Italy was represented. The universities, the crafts, and even athletic associations, each had a section, a proof that devotion to the Blessed Sacrament had permeated every grade of society. 'Twould be endless to enter on a description of the groups, their sections, their banners, their hymns.

The procession of the clergy was most imposing. First came the religious Orders in their various habits—the Franciscans, the Augustinians, the Capuchins, the Carmelites,

and Dominicans. Then followed the secular clergy, the Domestic Prelates, the Protonotary-Apostolics, the Metropolitan Chapter, the Mitred Abbots, the Bishops and Archbishops, eighty-seven in all, accompanied by their Secretaries, bearing the mitre. Prominent among the Archbishops was His Grace of Genoa, who immediately preceded the Cardinals. The Cardinals taking part in the procession were Cardinals Sincero, Bisleti, Tacci, Bonzano, Cagliero, Giorgi and, of course, the Cardinal Legate. As the procession moved the cannons thundered, the church bells rang, and every siren sounded its shrillest note. The Cardinal Legate preceded the Baldacchino, under which the monstrance, resting on a rich framework of silver, was borne in turn by priests, the Baldacchino itself being borne by prominent citizens, of whom a goodly train made up the end of the procession. The boy scouts, the national militia and the Carabinieri formed a guard of honour, and the military presented arms. Every street is lined with expectant but reverent onlookers, and every balcony and window thronged with earnest sympathisers, displaying their banners with mottoes expressive of faith in the Blessed Sacrament. Bands of music and children's choirs here and there saluted the procession as it passed. The route is by the Church of the Annunciation, where so many sessions had just been held, and passing under the triumphal arch with its many mottoes and symbols, the huge file moved onward to the harbour. Here the scene was indescribable. Noteworthy in the

throng is the venerable Salesian, Cardinal Cagliero, who, by special request, dropped out of the procession; and who, with the weight of eighty-six years on his shoulders, stepped on to the galley, amid the echoing applause of the multitude. The priests embark and are soon followed by the Prelates, Bishops, Archbishops and Cardinals. The Blessed Sacrament is transferred, and the Cardinal Legate receives the golden monstrance, with its studded gems, and, with his own hands, places it on the throne, beautifully canopied, which loving and artistic hands had prepared for it. *Il Bucintoro*, the galley, was modelled on the seventh-century style, and with its huge pelican adorning the prow, symbolical of Christ's love in the Eucharist, was a marvel in detail. The troops present arms, hymns are sung to the Blessed Sacrament, and the marvellous flotilla moves seaward. Now the cannons roar, the sirens shriek, the hovering aeroplanes one while drop their messages of faith and love, and again their silvered filigree, which, glittering in the sunlight, seemed as shimmering waves of silver in the wake. The White Cross borne on its craft leads the way. Then follows *Il Bucintoro*, with the Blessed Sacrament enthroned and its freight the most distinguished, the holiest, and best, the Church had to give. The *St. George* comes next, with its more than a thousand invited guests, and with them the entire civil authority of the city. In the wake came innumerable crafts and galleys, including that of the chanters, whose beautiful and well-trained voices, floating on the

breeze, seemed something more than earthly. As the procession moved onward to the sea every vantage point was thronged, and every vessel in the harbour had its swaying, struggling mass of human beings, who forgot the most elemental rules of order in their anxiety to view this unwonted and extraordinary sight. *Il Bucintoro*, with the Blessed Sacrament enthroned, encircled by Cardinals and Prelates, a bewildering array of crimson and purple, was the cynosure of every eye and the theme of every tongue. Some had taken up their position at one o'clock and it was now six in the evening. Even so, they were well repaid for their hours of weary waiting. Onward they go from the harbour, Ponte Morosini, to the open sea, their destination being the harbour Grazie, thence to the Piazza di Francia. They have now reached the turning-point; the galley slows, and the deafening sounds of cannon, sirens, and church bells announce the ceremony of the blessing of the sea. The ceremony over, a thousand voices in sweetest harmony intone the *Te Deum*.

The shades of evening begin to fall. Twilight soon thickens in Italy, notwithstanding the blue Italian sky. Now the marvellous flotilla directs its course to the port of debarkation. The scenes of the embarkation are all but repeated. Bands play their hymns to the Blessed Sacrament, choirs sing, the multitude catch up the refrain, and the mighty throng struggle to get into line for the final Benediction. Thus the procession is reformed, and moves onward to the Piazza di Francia, where a magnificent altar was erected.

'Twas the last blessing, the last altar, and, I might add, the altar was the last word in decoration. Groups of children in white encircled the altar. The Cardinals kneel in front: then the Archbishops and Bishops, and the people as best they might. The Cardinal Legate raises the monstrance above the reverent throng, and imparts solemn Benediction, while the shrill clang of the trumpets announces the joyous news to the city and people. All is over, and the Papal Delegate has fulfilled his mission faithfully and well. He now returns to the Archiepiscopal residence, blessing the people as he went, at the same time looking worn and fatigued. The people, too, suffered from their weary vigil, and mostly sought their homes and quarters. But the streets were crowded far into the night, and throngs gazed in wonderment at the illuminated churches, public buildings and private dwellings. The harbour, too, was illuminated, and every ship and craft that rested on its bosom was spangled with its myriad lights, and city and harbour presented a united but interminable vista. Again the cannons thunder, the fireworks hiss into the sky overhead, and each display is greater and more marvellous than before.

Thus ended the extraordinary manifestation of love and devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. It may be accepted that in the history of the Holy Eucharist nothing has surpassed the faith and piety so generally and so generously shown by the Genoese and the various contingents that came from the different parts of Italy.

This religious awakening was a revelation and, indeed, a source of edification to those who knew and saw Italy under circumstances the reverse of hopeful. May the good done at Genoa fructify a thousandfold. And may Mary's city, upon which she looks down so benignly from her lofty pedestal, always receive her Divine Son with even greater devotion and love, *nel Santissimo.*

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